Illustration

ISSUE NUMBER TWENTY-TWO
$15.00 US/CAN

81
0 74470 56540 6

Subscribe to Illustration Magazine!

ILLUSTRATION is a beautiful, educational, and scholarly journal devoted to the study of American illustration art. Published quarterly and printed in full color, each 80-page issue features the highest quality printing, photography and color reproductions available. For those with an interest in popular culture, commercial art and design, publishing history, or the collecting of original art, **ILLUSTRATION** is an indispensable resource—and the best source for new information on the illustrators of the past.

❑ **YES, SEND ME ISSUES 23 – 26** for $60.00 postpaid U.S. Canadian subscription rate $72.00. International rate is $100.00.

MAIL TO:

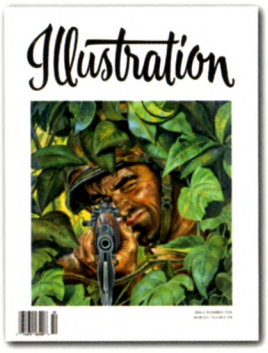
_____

_____

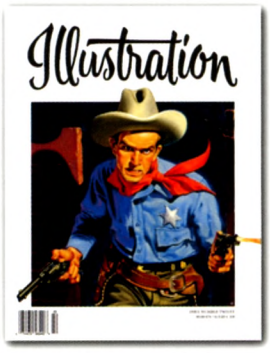
_____

_____

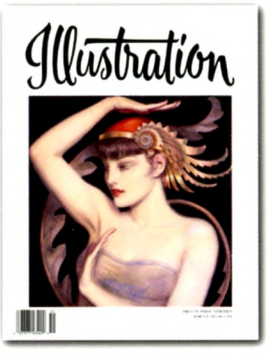
○ **#22** Blakeslee, Roberts, Merrill, more! **96 PAGES - $15.00**



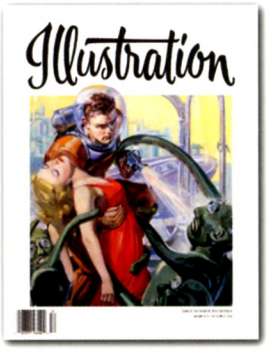
○ **ISSUE #10**
Raphael DeSoto, Mitchell Hooks, Tom Gill, Jack Lane, and more!
80 PAGES - $20.00



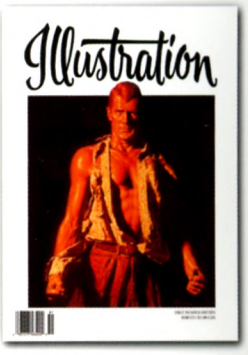
○ **ISSUE #12**
R.G. Harris, Harry Anderson, Bill Campbell, and more!
80 PAGES - $9.00



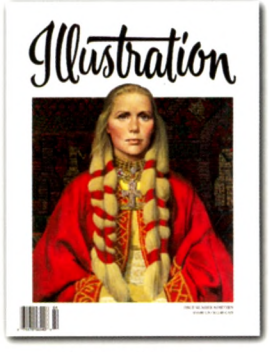
○ **ISSUE #13**
W.T. Benda, Alex Schomburg, Lee Brown Coye, and more!
80 PAGES - $20.00



○ **ISSUE #14**
J.W. Scott, A. Leslie Ross, The Artists of Film Fun, and more!
80 PAGES - $9.00



○ **ISSUE #16**
James Bama, Charles Showalter, The Cooper Studio, and more!
80 PAGES - $9.00



○ **ISSUE #19**
Louis Glanzman, Ed Emshwiller, P&H Studios, and more!
112 BIG PAGES - $10.00

○ **ISSUE #20**
Andrew Loomis, Willard Mullin, Alton Tobey, and more!
112 BIG PAGES - $20.00

○ **ISSUE #21**
Gustaf Tenggren, Al Parker, Barbara Bradley, and more!
112 PAGES - $15.00

○ **ISSUE #22**
Frederick Blakeslee, Morton Roberts, Merrill Publishing, and more!
96 PAGES - $15.00

ISSUES NOT SHOWN ARE SOLD OUT.

PRICES SHOWN ARE U.S. RATES ONLY, AND ARE POSTAGE PAID!

Order Today!

All listed prices are postage paid. 4-issue subscriptions are $60.00 in the U.S. *Send check or money order payable to:*
ILLUSTRATION MAGAZINE 3640 Russell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63110 **314-577-6768** EMAIL: DAN@ILLO.US

ORDER ONLINE at WWW. ILLUSTRATION-MAGAZINE.COM

Cover illustration by
Frederick Blakeslee
(1898-1973)

DANIEL ZIMMER
EDITOR - PUBLISHER - DESIGNER
ILLOMAG@GMAIL.COM

MATT ZIMMER
ASSISTANT EDITOR

TIMOTHY VAUGHAN-SANDERS
COPY EDITING

CONTRIBUTORS:

DAVID SAUNDERS

JEAN WOODCOCK

ABRAHAM ECHEVARRIA

BARRY KLUGERMAN

Illustration **logo designed by**
Gerard Huerta

ILLUSTRATION (ISSN 1543 4737)
Issue Number 22. Spring 2008

Copyright O 2008 by The Illustrated Press, tnc.

All tert and artwork © the respective creators and publishers. None of the malenal In this publication may be reproduced In any form without the written permission of ILLUSTRATION or the copyright holders. All of the images utilized herein are reproduced for historical and scholarly purposes only. Every effort has been made to provide factually accurate information.

ILLUSTRATION Is published quarterly. Single copies may be purchased for $15.00 postage paid In the U.S.; 4-issue subscriptions are available for $60.00 postage paid in the U.S., $72.00 Canada, or S100.00 international. Maka checks or money orders payable to ILLUSTRATION MAGAZINE.

For advertising information, rales, ond specifications, please contact Daniel Zimmer at tho address below.

ILLUSTRATION MAGAZINE
3640 Russell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63110
Tel: 314-577-6768
Email: ILLOMAG@GMAIL.COM

WWW.IU.USTRATION-MAQAZINE.COM

Illustration

VOLUME SIX, ISSUE NUMBER TWENTY-TWO — SPRING 2008

Contents

14 Frederick Blakeslee (1898-1973)
by David Saunders

50 Morton Roberts: An Illusion of Life
by Abraham Echevarria and Barry Klugerman

72 The Story of The Merrill Company Publishers
by Jean Woodcock

94 New and Notable

96 Exhibitions and Events

From the Editor...

In this issue, my good friend and regular contributor David Saunders returns with one of his best features yet—an in-depth look at the life and art of Frederick Blakeslee, one of the giants in the aviation pulp genre. While his many hundreds of covers have been admired by pulp fans for generations, very little has been known about the man himself. David's extensive feature sheds new light on this artist, and our story showcases many beautiful and rare examples of his original cover artwork.

Author Abe Echevarria teams up with previous contributor Barry Klugerman to share some of his memories of the life and work of Morton Roberts, a fantastic magazine illustrator whose career was cut tragically short by his premature death at the age of 37. Our story features many examples of his original illustration work.

Our final story in this issue presents a brief history of The Merrill Company Publishers, one of the premier children's book publishers of the 1940s and 50s. The current owner of the company, Jean Woodcock, shares her story of being in the right place and the right time to save the company's warehouses of original paintings and files from destruction. We showcase over 60 paintings out of her collection of over 600! Jean is interested in selling her paintings, as well, so if you see something you like be sure you drop her an email! I have a feeling these will be very popular.

In other news, if you are a subscriber and you aren't sure if this might be your last issue, never fear... renewal notices are mailed separately to all subscribers upon the expiration of your subscription. As always, I thank you for your prompt renewals and continued support.

If you are aware of any exhibitions or events related to illustration history, no matter how obscure or isolated, please let me know about it. Send me your notices so that I may share this information with my readers!

ERNEST

LIMITED EDITION POSTERS

Only 250 Copies Made, and Selling Quickly!

Matte Finish on Photo-Quality Paper: Cowboy–20" x 30"; Pin-up–23" x 30"

CHIRIACKA

ERNEST CHIRIACKA

GUEST OF HONOR

Windy City
Pulp and Paperback Convention

April 23-25, 2005
Rosemont, Illinois

Signed by the artist, including postage and handling: $55.00 each (unsigned $35.00 each)
Please send check or money order to:
ERNEST CHIRIACKA – 2659 East Lake of the Isles, Minneapolis, MN 55408
For more information about these posters and other paintings for sale, please email the artist at
Ernest@ErnestChiriacka.com, or contact Athene Westergaard at 612-377-1061

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Mr. Zimmer:

I have received in the mail issues number 20 and 21 of *Illustration... Illustration* is the most beautiful magazine I regularly receive, and I wanted to congratulate you on the excellent work you are doing. In this age of internet communication and images, I am happy to see someone still holding onto print, paper, and high production values. The experience of handling and reading such a printed object cannot be replaced by anything the computer has to offer.

I wanted to thank you for something else, too—the excellent article you ran in your very first issue on James Avati by Piet Schreuders. It brought Avati to my attention, and I began to research his paintings for the covers of the novels of William Faulkner. I have attempted to demonstrate that Avati's covers influenced the reputation of Faulkner in an article to be published in a forthcoming book on Faulkner and the visual arts by the Universit)' of Tennessee Press. Piet Schreuders was very helpful to me in that project. It will see print sometime in 2008.

I hope *Illustration* thrives for many years to come!

M. Thomas Inge
Blackwell Professor of Humanities,
Randolph-Macon College

Dear *Illustration:*

This is a great magazine! I have all of them. They are becoming a giant book on past illustrators. Thanks for the good work. The print quality is head and shoulders above the rest. When that box appears in the mail, I get a lift! I hope you go to six issues a year!

Franklin W.
Mesquite, TX

Dear Friends:

A big THANKS for your prompt reply to my recent letter in which 1 stated I hadn't received issues 20 and 21. They came in Monday, and when 1 opened the package 1 was transfixed by what I saw: the Loomis cover on issue 20. It literally took my breath away! What a knockout piece of painting, and so beautifully presented...

I've long been a Loomis fan, since *Fun With* A *Pencil* days, so the story of his life and career—and the many drawings and paintings included—hit me just right. (I also attended the American Academy of Art but, unfortunately, twenty years too late to have come under his tutelage.)

I will be renewnng my subscription to *Illustration.* 1 think its terrific; you guys are doing a great job... Best wishes for continued success!

Dave H.
Melbourne. FL

Dear Dan:

It gives me great pleasure to renew my subscription to your amazing magazine.

For me, there is no better magazine being published today. I can't tell you how excited I get every time a new issue arrives. I hope it is a successful business venture for you, and I hope it will continue for many years to come!

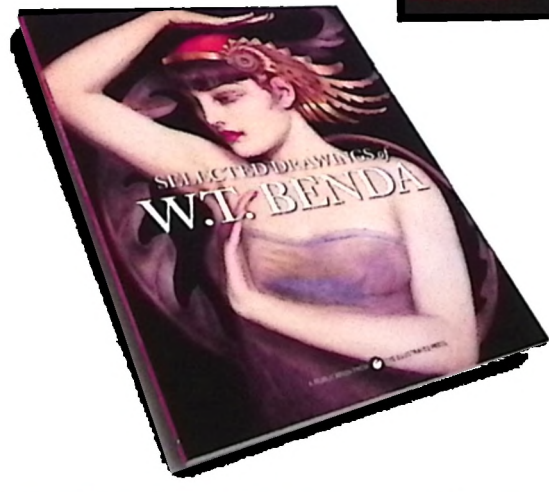
John G.

Daniel:

I just received issues #20 and #21 today, and while I haven't had a chance to read the articles, I wanted to congratulate you on the high quality of *Illustration.* I started receiving .the magazine at issue #11, and although you had quite a few back issues available at that time I chose not to purchase them, thinking I would just pick them up cheaply on ebay over time. With issue #3 selling for $112.00 on 2/18, issue #7 selling for $40.99 on 2/18, issue #2 selling for $46.00 on 12/12, and issue #4 selling for $37.00 on 12/5, I guess I was wrong! The high prices for back issues is definitely a testament to the quality and desirability of the magazine, and shows that it's a "keeper." Again, keep up the good work. ♦

Jim K.

Available NOW!



SELECTED DRAWINGS OF W.T. BENDA

A new, 100-page, perfect-bound softcover book featuring over 100 drawings by accomplished illustrator W.T. Benda. A strictly limited edition of copies have been printed, and are available now for only $10.00 u.s., $13 CAN, $20 INTL.

Send Check or Money Order Payable to:

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS, INC.
3640 Russell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63110

VVWW.ILLUSTRATION-MAG AZINE. COM

HERITAGE
ILLUSTRATION ART AUCTION

SEEKING QUALITY CONSIGNMENTS FOR OUR SPRING EVENT

1

2

3

WE INVITE YOU TO CONSIGN

- Generous cash advances available
- Competitive consignment terms
- Timely payments to every consignor since 1976

ALWAYS SEEKING WORKS BY:

Norman Rockwell
Maxfield Parrish
N.C. Wyeth
Harvey Dunn
Gil Elvgren
Alberto Vargas
J.C. Leyendecker
Howard Pyle

To reserve a complimentary book or catalog of your choice, register online at HA.com/IM7937 or call 866-835-3243 and mention reference #IM7937.

Highlights of our upcoming June 5 auction include:

1 N. C. WYETH
Mrs. Van Arden Sings, A Story of the North Country, illustration, *Scribner's Magazine*, June 1913
Oil on canvas, 25 x 34in.
Est: $40,000-$60,000

2 LEROY NEIMAN
Tyson vs. Spinks Once and For All, 1988
Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 35in.
Est: $30,000-$50,000

3 GIL ELVGREN
On Her Toes, 1954
Oil on canvas, 30 x 24in.
Est: $20,000-$30,000

To sell your illustration art at auction, call or email Ed Jaster today at 800-872-6467, ext. 1288 or EdJ@HA.com.
We also welcome consignments of book cover art, magazine illustration art, and original comic book or comic strip art.

Annual Sales Over $600 Million • Over 350,000 Registered Online Bidder-Members

3500 Maple Ave, 17th Floor • Dallas, Texas 75219 • 214-528-3500 • 800-872-6467 • HA.com

Auctioneer: Sam Foose, TX license #00011727 • This auction is subject to a 19.5% buyer's premium. 7937

HERITAGE HA.com
Auction Galleries
The World's Largest Collectibles Auctioneer

CHARLES G. MARTIGNETTE ,JR.

September 6, 1950 — February 3, 2008

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of my dear friend, mentor, and supporter Charles G. Martignette, Jr.

Over the past few years I have had the pleasure of spending many hours talking on the phone with Charles. Though we never met in the flesh, we became close friends. He would regale me with endless stories of his life, and I would sit in rapt attention absorbing it all. He was a brilliant and funny man, a gifted storyteller, and a compulsive collector. He had a huge heart, as his close friends will tell you. I've never known a more entertaining character in my entire life. He was in love with illustration art, and he was a tremendous supporter of this magazine and myself. As I write this I'm still in a state of shock, and I can't really believe that someone so much larger than life could be gone from this world so soon.

Charles G. Martignette, Jr., 2008

For those who may not know, Charles was the author of several best-selling books—*The Great American Pin-Up, Gil Elvgren—All His Glamorous American Pin-Ups,* and *Pin-Up—The Edward Runci Collection.* He was a self-made man and a pioneer in the field of collecting American illustration. His mentor was Walt Reed, and for many years Charles was a steady customer of the Illustration House. From the moment he discovered and purchased his first painting in the late 1970s, he was hooked. Over the years he accumulated many thousands of original works. I'm not sure if Charles owned the collection or if the collection owned him, but the sheer volume of material was staggering. During the past year Charles was looking to restore order to his chaotic lite, and to reap some financial rewards from his lifetime of collecting. As he frequently told me, he was rich in art but cash poor, and he "lived like an animal in two rooms." I don't know if this colorful depiction was true or not, but as 1 said, Charles was a character! He invited me down to Florida many times, and 1 regret to say I never made the journey.

Chailes always thought I should devote an entire issue to the simy of his life (his ego was legendary) so it is heart-hieakmg for me to attempt to paraphrase his accomplish-menls m so few words here.

Works from Charles' private collections have been exhibited by The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History and the National Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, The High Museum, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Carnegie Institute Museum of Art, The Henry Ford Museum, The Chicago Museum of Science and Industry, the Oakland Museum, The Boston Museum of Science, The Museum of American Illustration at the Society of Illustrators, and many more.

Between 1980 and 1990, Charles was a regular contributor to *Playboy.* The magazine published an annual series of articles called "Provocative Period Pieces," which featured works from his collection of antique erotica.

Over the last 25 years, Charles was interviewed and quoted by the *New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal,* and scores of newspaper articles have been published including prominent feature stories in *The Boston Globe, The Miami Herald, The Boston Herald, The Chicago Tribune, The Fort Lauderdale News, The Arizona Republic, The Oregonian, The Atlantic City Press,* and periodicals such as *Fame Magazine, Boston Magazine, Miami Magazine, Millionaire Magazine, Billionaire Magazine, Sarasota Magazine, Tropic Magazine, The Boston Sunday Globe Magazine,* and dozens more.

At press time I have no idea of what will become of "The World's Largest Collection of American Illustration Art." Charles leaves behind warehouses and storage units full of material, the accumulation of a lifetime of compulsive collecting. I am not sure who will be heir to this fortune, or if portions of the collection will begin appearing on the market any time soon. It breaks my heart to think of the vultures circling. Charles held his art dear, and as anyone who has seen his price lists would know, he wasn't particularly interested in selling anything. Even if you *were* a "qualified buyer" (whatever the hell that means!)

Charles, wherever you are, I love you buddy. ♦

— Danie! Zimmer

Gil Bvgren, Bear *Back Rider,* 1962. 011 on canvas, 30" x 24"

ROBERT GEORGE HARRIS

September 9, 1911 — December 23, 2007

Robert George Harris, nationally known American illustrator and portrait painter, passed away peacefully on December 23, 2007.

He was born Sept. 9,1911 in Kansas City, Missouri.

While still attending high school, he was preparing for a career in Art by attending night and summer school at the Kansas City Art Institute—studying illustration under the noted Monte Crews. He also studied at the Grand Central Art School in New York, under illustrator Harvey Dunn, and at the Art Students League under famed anatomist George Bridgman.

He set up his own art studio in New Rochelle, New York, in 1933. Artistic success soon followed, with his colorful paintings of Western story covers for the pulp magazines flourishing at the time.

In 1935, he married Marjorie Elenora King, also a student at the Kansas City Art Institute. With her help and encouragement, painting story illustrations for the leading women's magazines began in 1939 and continued for the next thirty years. His art was seen on a regular basis in the *Saturday Evening Post, McCalls, Good Housekeeping, Redlwk, Cosmopolitan,* and *Ladies Home Journal.* These were interspersed with illustrations for national advertising accounts—Coco Cola, Cannon Sheets, and many more.

In 1953, he moved his family to Scottsdale, Arizona, and continued in the field of illustration until 1961. At that time he was also painting portraits. He was honored in 1962 with a one-man show of portraits at the Phoenix Art Museum.

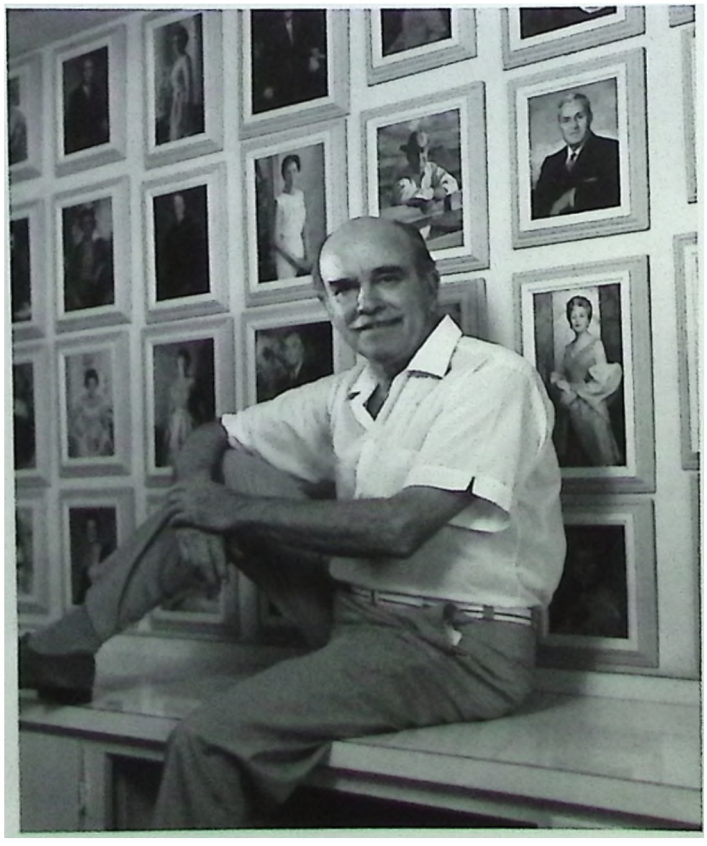
In 1970, a new home and studio was built in Carefree, Arizona, where he continued in portraiture until his lelnement in 19S9. His oil portraits hang in the Department of justice, Washington, D.C., and in many private collections m the U S.

Bob is a Ide-time member of the Society of Illustrators. He is listed in *Who's Who in American Art; Who's Who in the West; Who's Who in Arizona; The Illustrator in America 1880 to 1980;* and *The Illustrator in America 1900-1960.*

His hobbies were flying, trail rides, and classic cars. He is survived and well beloved by his children, (son) Craig and Susie Harris, and (daughter) Marcia and Terry Sewell, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Donations may be made to Hospice of the Valley.

R.G. Harris' work was featured in *Illustration* #12.



Robert G. Harris, original Illustration for *Cosmopolitan,* June 1950. Oil on canvas

WANTED: TOP

I AM SEEKING THESE NORMAN SAUNDERS ORIGINALS!

NEW MYSTERY ADVENTURES 12/35

SAUCY MOVIE TALES 4/36

TEN DETECTIVE ACES 5/41

BEST SPORTS 8/51

★ ALSO SEEKING KEY GOLDEN AGE COMICS ★
ORIGINAL COMIC BOOK ART ★ PULP AND ILLUSTRATION ART
★ WACKY PACKAGES ORIGINAL PAINTINGS ★

EMAIL ERIC ROBERTS AT: PLASTERED_PEANUTS@YAHOO.COM

DOLLAR PAID

DO YOU OWN ANY OF THESE ORIGINAL PAINTINGS?

DETECTIVE BOOK 2/48

MARVEL SCIENCE 5/51

LONE WOLF DETECTIVE 10/40

A. MERRITT'S FANTASY 10/50

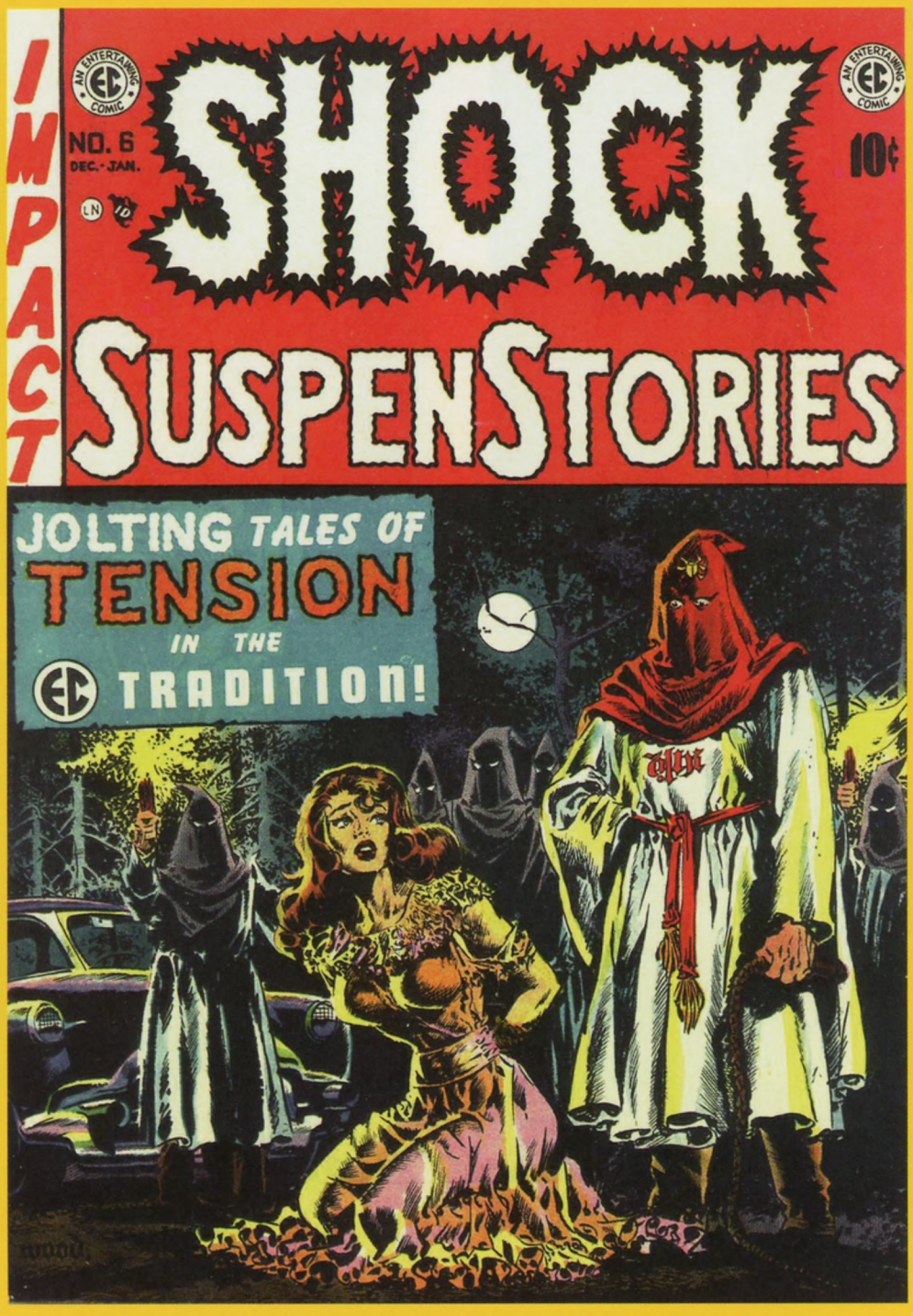
I AM ALSO SEEKING ORIGINAL PULP PAINTINGS BY: BERGEY, BRUNDAGE, DESOTO, FINLAY, PAUL, WARD, PARKHURST, SCHOMBURG, ST. JOHN

CALL ERIC ROBERTS AT: 650-814-9196

www.triksr4kids.com

WANTED: TOP

I AM SEEKING CLASSIC COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART!



★ ALSO SEEKING KEY GOLDEN AGE COMICS ★
ORIGINAL COMIC BOOK ART ★ PULP AND ILLUSTRATION ART
★ WACKY PACKAGES ORIGINAL PAINTINGS ★

EMAIL ERIC ROBERTS AT: PLASTERED_PEANUTS@YAHOO.COM

DOLLAR PAID

DO YOU OWN ANY OF THESE ORIGINALS?

I AM ALSO SEEKING ORIGINAL COMIC ART BY: NEAL ADAMS, R. CRUMB, JACK DAVIS, DITKO, INFANTINO, INGELS, KIRBY, KURTZMAN, AND WALLY WOOD

CALL ERIC ROBERTS AT: 650 814 9196

www.triksr4kids.com

Frederick Blakeslee, c. 1931
Photo courtesy of Pratt Institute

FREDERICK BLAKESLEE

(1898-1973)

by David Saunders

Soaring through flak-spattered clouds to protect their mighty Vickers bombers, two nimble Sopwiths ward off a valiant wing of Fokkers high above a grand industrial vista of a burning factory rail yard. One flaming Albatross becomes a black streak of smoke, adding its own fatal fireball to the hell below, where ant-like people dash to anti-aircraft batteries or flee in horror from the awesome spectacle, whose detailed rendering deserves thorough inspection— especially the lower-right corner, where the artist has signed his name in block letters above a waving line, "FREDERICK BLAKESLEE."

Frederick Manley Blakeslee was born in Buffalo on December 4, 1898. His parents were Bertha and Harland (Harvey) Manley Blakeslee. Harvey was descended from early English settlers and Bertha was a daughter of an English immigrant. They were married in 1897, when the groom was 31 and the bride was 28, in Trinity Episcopal Church. The Anglican tradition of the Episcopalian faith played a central role in the Blakeslee family.

Buffalo is located in the northwest corner of New York State, on the Niagara River between lakes Erie and Ontario just below Niagara Falls. By the turn of the century, Buffalo was an industrial center that dominated the trade routes between Chicago and New York City. The 1901 Pan-American Exposition was held in Buffalo, and the city's phenomenal prosperity was reflected in the fair's central edifice, The Fountain of Abundance—a neo-classical ring of alluring river nymphs, cradling ancient amphorae to their white marble breasts and pouring forth a cascade of symbolic bounty. The fair became headline news around the world when President William McKinley, while greeting the public at the Temple of Music, was assassinated by two pistol shots from an anarchist. To quell national hysteria following his death, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt immediately took the oath of office in Buffalo and became the 26th, and the youngest, U.S. president at age 42.

Buffalo's wealth came from the power of the railroad and the engineering marvel of the Erie Canal, which extended international shipping 360 miles into America's heartland. The canal begins in Buffalo and carries ships eastward to connect with the Hudson River near Albany, and then south to New York. It was one of the 19th century's most ambitious construction projects, and was the world's longest man-made canal. The third improved artery, called the Barge Canal, was begun in 1903, and is still in use today. Buffalo was also a massive rail center with over thirty different lines moving rail passengers and freight throughout the country.

These forces of commerce combined to make Buffalo a dynamic factory town of historic proportions at the time of Fred Blakeslee's childhood. The visual impact of these massive industries left a significant impression on his creative imagination. This was the era of Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and the Wright brothers. In keeping with the times, Fred's father, who was a skilled factory machinist, invented a tabulator mechanism for typewriting machines and submitted his design to the U.S. Patent Office in 1904. It was approved and produced by the Jarvis Typewriter Company and paid royalties, which afforded the family to move to a nicer home where Fred's sister Helen was born in 1908.

One of the greatest industrialists of Buffalo history was Glenn Hammond Curtiss (1878-1930). He was America's top designer and manufacturer of high performance motorcycles, and he was also an enterprising genius on the scale of Ford, Firestone, and Kellogg. He worked with Alexander Graham Bell and the Wright brothers to remodel his motorcycle engine into a lightweight aircraft motor. By 1909 Curtiss was setting new air speed records with a plane of his own design. Louis Bleriot was rated as the greatest pilot in Europe, but Glenn Curtiss was rated number two. In 1910 he flew from Albany to New York City to tvin a $10,000 prize from Joseph Pulitzer amid cheering acclaim from newspapers nationwide.

Original cover Illustration for *Dare-DtrllAces,* March, 1938. Photo courtesy ofThe Illustration House, Inc.

The Albright Art School drawing class, circa 1916

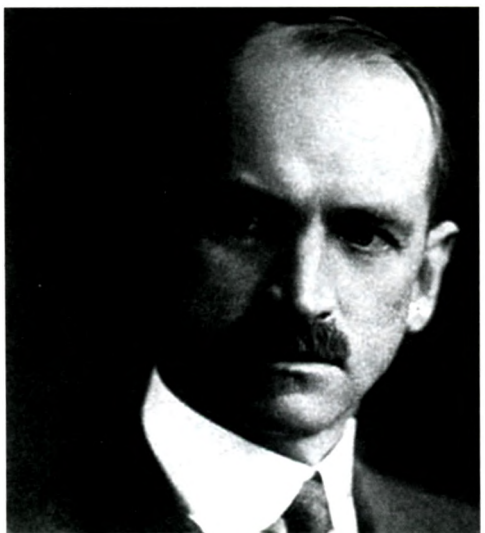
Curtiss was issued the first pilots' license in U.S. history, among his many accomplishments recorded in the Aviation Hall of Fame. In 1911 Curtiss started a flying school. In June of that same year, during the Buffalo Aviation Meet, one of his first graduates made a sensational stunt flight in a Curtiss plane over Niagara Falls. Twenty thousand spectators gathered along the shoreline in Driving Park, which was only a short walk from Fred Blakeslee's home. It was summer vacation, and Fred was twelve years old, when he and every other kid from Buffalo were thrilled to witness the impressive dare-devil feat of the world's first crossing of Niagara Falls in an aeroplane.

Besides trainers and stunt planes, Curtiss also produced the Triad A-1 seaplane, which was purchased by the navies of the U.S., Britain, Russia, Japan, and Germany. Curtiss opened his first Buffalo manufacturing plant in 1915, only three blocks from the Blakeslee home. One year later, Curtiss opened the world's largest aeroplane factory on a thirty-one acre industrial complex in Buffalo. It employed 18,000 workers. Among those new employees was the seventeen-year-old Fred Blakeslee, who was delighted to be an office boy in the design department where Curtiss himself worked at a drafting table. As diplomatic pressure mounted for America to enter the war in Europe, the U.S. Army Air Corps ordered Curtiss to develop reliable military aircraft. He produced the JN-4, a twin-seater biplane, popularly known as "The Jenny," and the N-9 seaplane version for the navy. Thousands were sold to the militaries of the U.S., Canada and Britain. The Great War officially began for Americans on April 6,1917. It also began a vastly profitable era for the Curtiss Aeroplane Company.

By that time, Fred Blakeslee had been promoted to assistant-draftsman in the Curtiss design department. Along with the planes that Curtiss produced, the young draftsman was also able to inspect the construction of sample aircraft from Germany, Italy, Britain, and France. The most thrilling aspect of the job was the occasional chance to accompany pilots on test flights, where Fred learned the flying capabilities of each design. The opportunity to work in the pioneer years with some of the founders of aviation design was a profoundly formative experience of lifelong inspiration.

To pursue the popular dream of becoming America's next inventive genius, Blakeslee studied drafting, lettering, drawing, and design, in night classes at the Albright Art School. The classes were conducted in a wing of the former Temple of Art Pavilion, which had been built during the Pan-American Exposition to showcase Buffalo's cultural refinement, but in fact, most of the old master paintings on exhibit were on temporary loan from ambitious New York art galleries eager to sell to the nouveau-riche aristocrats of Buffalo industry. After the exposition ended, the impressive white-marble pavilion was one of the few structures that remained on the park grounds as a residual enhancement of Buffalo civic life.

A portion of the new museum building was reserved for the art school, which was named after its generous benefactor, John Joseph Albright. The art teachers included the illustrator Lucius W. Hitchcock, and the portraitist Edward Dufner. They taught Blakeslee color theory, design, and composition. Although he was a good student, his main interest at art school was to improve his drafting skills for a career



The Curtiss Aeroplane Factory (Main Plant), Buffalo, NY

Glenn Hammond Curtiss (1878–1930)

Original cover Illustration for G-8 anti *His BttUt Acts,* July, 1937. Photo courtesy of Robert Lesser

in aviation design. New art students were all required to take Introductory Drawing to study the human figure from plaster casts and semi-nude models. Blakeslee dutifully fulfilled that requirement in order to qualify for more interesting courses in advanced graphics, but privately he considered the compulsory "Life Class" to be an embarrassing waste of time.

The first day that Frederick Blakeslee was eligible for the mandator)' national draft registration was on September 12, 1918. He reported to his local board for registration and a physical exam. He was recorded as being nineteen years old, medium height, medium build, with brown eyes and black hair. Despite his employment as "draftsman" in the design department of Curtiss Aeroplane Company, and the government's recognition of the national defense value of the aeroplane industry, Blakeslee was accepted for induction in the Army. As fate would have it, the war ended just two months later and the young draftsman was never mobilized.

After the war, the mass production of military aircraft slowed as government vendors scaled back to peacetime production schedules. Curtiss stockholders voted to transfer the company management to a businessman, and that freed Glenn Curtiss to focus on research and development. He moved his Buffalo design department to a Long Island testing-grounds in Amityville, New York. Curtiss had made a fortune through his munitions contracts, but other aviation companies were less fortunate. The Wright brothers began to lose money, and Curtiss bought them out to create the Curtiss-Wright Aviation Company. Another company, Sperry Gyroscope of Brooklyn, manufactured precision instruments for ships and aircraft, such as the gyrocompass, gyrostabilizer, altimeters, and bombsights.

Sperry wanted to develop a pilotless, radio-controlled, aerial torpedo, but he needed Curtiss to supply the working capital, access to government contracts, and a fleet of reliable aircraft for tests, so they created the Curtiss-Sperry Company in 1920, with a design team that happened to include the twenty-one-year-old Frederick Blakeslee.

Fred was excited to be a part of the project, and to move away from home to an apartment near the Sperry factory in Brooklyn, where the design team struggled to refine the stability, altitude, and guidance of the explosive-packed aeroplane. Their goal was to achieve detonation within two miles of the target from a sixty-mile-distant radio controller, but their greatest challenge turned out to be a successful pilotless launch. A solution came when a member of the design team suggested using a spur of the Long Island Rail Road track as a stable launching system. After two years, and the destruction of all but one prototype aeroplane, the Curtiss-Sperry Flying Bomb accomplished the controlled flight of an unmanned, heavier-than-air vehicle, for the first time in history. Due to its high cost and lack of reliability, (or peacetime applications), it never went into mass production.

While working at the Curtiss-Sperry Company, Blakeslee discovered that several senior draftsmen had received professional certification from the nearby Pratt Institute—a technical school funded by a benevolent oil tycoon to provide training in practical skills with commercial applications, such as architecture, illustration, printing, design, drafting, and engineering. Although certification was not a college degree, it did qualify the recipient to work at the highest industrial standards. Most students held full-time jobs and could only supplement their skills by enrolling in night school open course work, but by 1924 Blakeslee was working part-time for Sperry Gyroscope, so he decided to concentrate on earning his certification as a professional draftsman. He signed up for the certificate program, which was administered by the School of Drawing, Painting, and Illustration. *The Prattonia* yearbooks of 1925 and 1926 list Blakeslee as the President of the Artsmen Club, where he was commonly referred to as "Stub," because of his habit of wearing a pencil stub behind his right ear. His other nickname at Pratt was "Old English," presumably because of his Anglican ancestry, his proper decorum, and his sporting of tweed suits—as well as his use of a popular aftershave lotion.

The attempted launch of the Curtin Sperry Aerial Torpedo from a moving car In Amityville, NY. 1923

Frederick Blakeslee, from The *Prattonia* yearbook, 1925. Photo courtesy of Pratt Institute

www.GrapefruitMoonGallery.com

Original Artwork from the Golden Age of Illustration

Heinrich Kley
Our Unrefined Side, c. 1910
Fine Art

William Cahill
Breakfast's Ready Lil' Missy, 1913
Cream of Wheat Advertising Art

Earl Moran
Portrait of Danice Daniels, 1953
Brown & Bigelow Calendar Art

William Soare
Double Action Detective Menace Pulp, 1939
Pulp Cover Illustration Art

James Ross Bryson
Reverie In Green, 1914
Thomas D Murphy Calendar Art

Charles Bosseron Chambers
Visited By Satyrs, c. 1920
Fine Art

Rolf Armstrong
The Crinoline Girl, 1939
Calendar Art

Edward Brewer
None But the Brave Deserve the Fare, 1918
Cream of Wheat Advertising Art

Leslie Thrasher
Buena Vista Blvd & Broadway, 1927
Liberty Magazine Cover Art

Daniel D. Murphy, Owner ~ 612.251.1669 by appointment

BUYING :

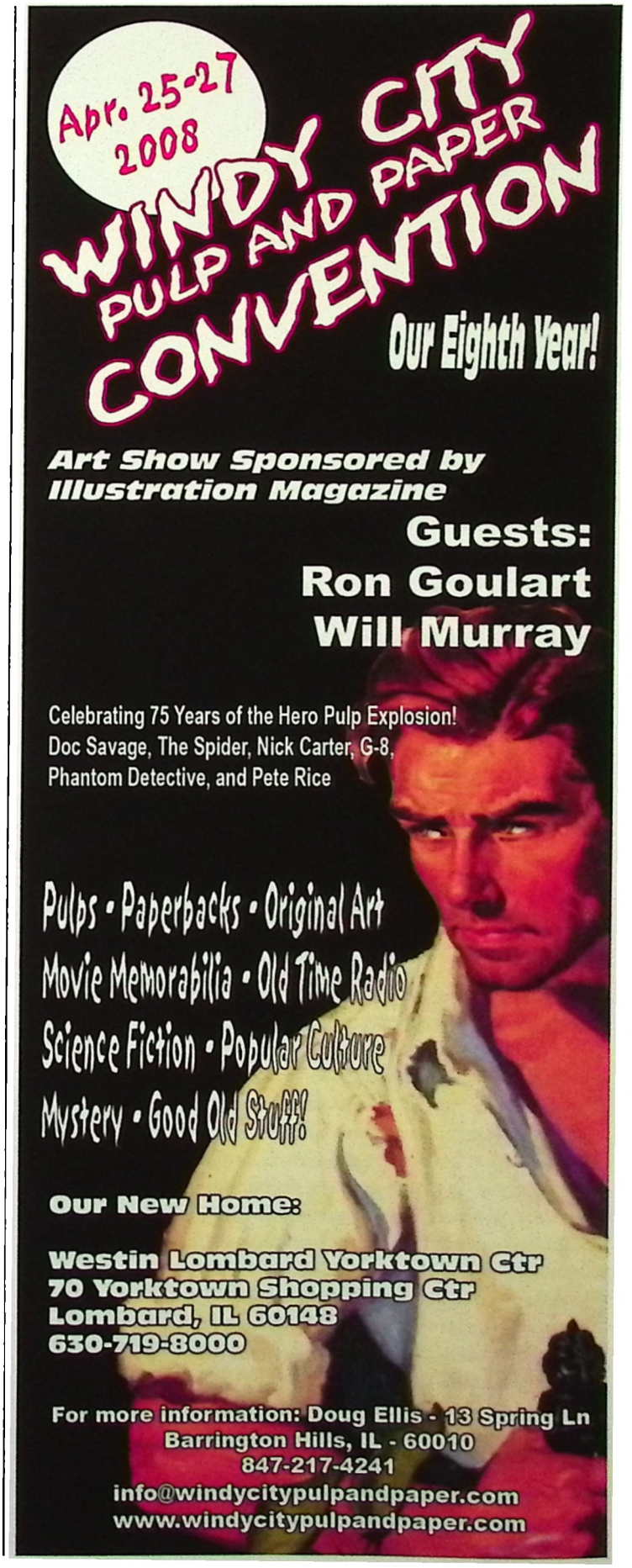
~ original illustration art ~ cover, pulp and pin-up art ~ vintage pin-up calendars and related ephemera ~ pulp magazines

While a student at Pratt, Blakeslee faithfully continued his family tradition of attending Episcopal Sunday services. Saint Mary's Church was across the street from the school, and there Fred met the rector, Reverend Doctor James Clarence Jones, a distinguished sixty-five-year-old clergyman, whose authoritative sermons profoundly impressed Blakeslee—almost as much as his pretty twenty-year-old daughter, Lorna Covert Jones. Lorna had graduated from Packer College in Brooklyn and was studying Library and Archival Sciences at Pratt in order to qualify for work as a certified librarian. Lorna's parents approved of Fred, so he was soon invited to family meals in the church rectory, where the couple began their formal courtship.

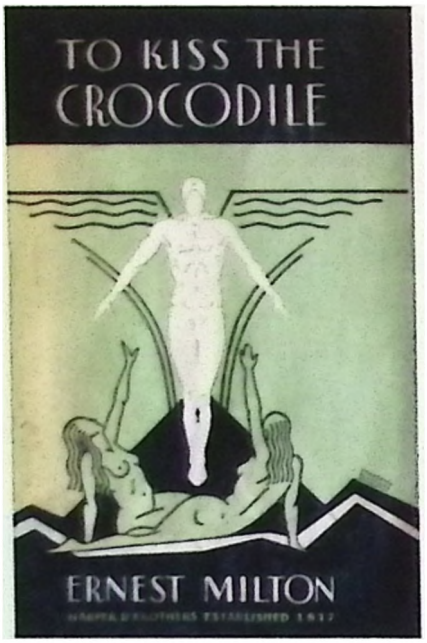
In 1926, Blakeslee earned his degree from Pratt to become a professionally certified draftsman, letterer, and commercial artist, after crossing paths with several other outstanding students—Walter Martin Baumhofer, Rudolph Belarski, Eugene M. Frandzen, John Fleming Gould, and Arthur Leslie Ross—all of whom remained lifelong friends. He also studied with the charismatic painting teacher, Harold Winfield Scott (1897-1977), who at that time was already a famous freelance illustrator who worked for many publishers, including Street & Smith. H. W. Scott was one of the most impressive men in the history of pulp art. Named after his relative, the national hero of the Mexican American War General Winfield Scott, H. W. Scott also held a commanding influence over his own art student "troops." One of Scott's many adventures was his service as a flight mechanic for the Lafayette Escadrille, where several pilots, such as Billy Mitchell, were alumni of the Curtiss Flying School. Blakeslee's training as a draftsman under Curtiss impressed Scott, who was renowned for generously helping his pupils to find employment. Scott was instrumental in the fact that two of his former students, Blakeslee and Belarski, were both hired as art teachers on the staff at Pratt Institute. Blakeslee taught classes in Lettering and Advanced Design. Scott also encouraged his graduates to find freelance work in the publishing industry by personally introducing them to art directors. By 1927 Blakeslee was supplementing his teacher's income with small freelance jobs, doing pen and ink graphic design work for several New York publishers.

At that time, the most important trend in design was the Art Deco movement, so teaching the basics of this style to students was an essential task for a professor of Lettering and Advanced Design. Art Deco was the popular design style of the modern Machine Age, composed of sleek figures and symmetrical repetitions of angles, sunbursts, and waving lines. Because of its high regard for luxurious streamlined efficiency and speedy aerodynamic machinery, Art Deco was widely used in the decoration of airports, train stations, and steamship offices.

In 1927, Blakeslee got his first big freelance assignment to design a book jacket for Harper & Brothers Publishers of London and New York. *To Kiss The Crocodile* was the first novel by a London stage celebrity, Ernest Milton, (who later starred as Robespierre opposite Leslie Howard in film *The Scarlet Pimpernel,* and as Rupert Cadell in the Hitchcock film



< Original Illustration ior Dare-DeWMces, March, 1934. Photo couresy oflhe Illustration House. Inc.



Cover design for To Kits *the Crocodile*, 1927

Cover design for *Old Father of Waters*, 1928

Rope). This project was exceptional for at least four reasons: 1. it was Blakeslee's first cover assignment; 2. it was the first appearance of nude figures in his cover art; 3. it was the *last* appearance of nude figures in his cover art; 4. it was Blakeslee's first artwork to feature the waving line motif that became his signature trademark. In many ways, this book cover design project was the milestone at the start of Blakeslee's art career.

Naturally, the artist wanted to make a good first impression on his public by illustrating the essence of the story in a captivating way. *To Kiss the Crocodile* is a tragic homoerotic tale of an effeminate and immature young man with no goal in life, and his downward spiral of depression, drug addiction, madness, and masochistic suicide. His only redemption is the enduring affection for his infantile spirit in the memories of his frustrated lovers. It is a modern novel from the exiled lost generation. Rather than portraying the tragic protagonist in his wretched dissolution, Blakeslee created a chic Art Deco design that celebrates the resurrection of his cleansed spirit. A nude man of pure white soars erect on perfectly symmetrical wings of waving lines above two exhausted earth-bound women, who pose like discarded harem slaves, yearning for the unobtainable man. The stiff precision in these three nude bodies provides a rare glimpse of Blakeslee's temperate feelings about sex. Even in this one exceptional display of overt nudity, out of respect tor propriety, the hero's crotch is blank. The waving lines in his ethereal wings flow horizontally in a weightless manner, in contrast to the heavy downward flow of the women's sensuous hair. Waving lines are used in Art Deco to symbolize a puma! flowing force, like wind or water. Blakeslee uses these symbols to poignantly illustrate the essential conflict of the novel, while ignoring the sordid specifics. The literal pictographic message of this book cover is that a sex-free man rises above the jagged earth of feminine yearnings and attains miraculous triumphant redemption thanks to the angelic support of wings that are upheld by a divine flowing force. Blakeslee's cover features a primal hero, who resembles the crucified savior as well as Icarus (the mythological ancestor of Charles Lindbergh), to recast this sensuously morbid novel as a story of spiritual redemption for Adam and Eve's original sin.

Most young artists in the era of Joseph Christian Leyendecker struggled to find a recognizable style that could be identified by a distinctive signature. This self-conscious pressure to devise an artistic persona reaches the critical stage when signing that first important publication. Up until this time, Blakeslee had always trained to be a practical draftsman, and had never presented himself as a "grand artiste.'' But in the process of designing this book cover Blakeslee did find something meaningful, which he could identify with and incorporate into an artistic signature. Notice that the waving lines within the uplifting wings do not radiate outward like natural feathers. Instead, these waving lines are Art Deco symbols that represent a flowing force, and, considering their context on the wings of a purified soul ascending towards heaven, that force would seem to be heavenly redemption. A miniature version of that same waving line also uplifts "FREDERICK BLAKESLEE" in his tiny signature. This compelling derivation suggests that the waving line in Blakeslee's signature is a covert declaration, "I too have been redeemed." The addition of this private statement of faith within Blakeslee's artistic signature may have served some meaningful purpose, because he continued

Cow design *for The Young and Secret*, 1930

War Stories, **September 26,1929**

Saint Mary's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, NY, circa 1925

to sign his name in this fashion on all of his artworks for the rest of his life, while all of his correspondence was signed with a regular cursive signature. The only cursive element in Blakeslee's *artistic signature* is the waving line symbol, which upholds an otherwise impersonal group of block letters. Artists were expected to sign their work with showy recognizable signatures, but a flamboyant signature is the sign of an ostentatious man. Blakeslee was a faithful Christian who preferred to present himself as an unpretentious man. He was courting a reverend's daughter and was well aware that the seventh deadly sin was conceited Pride. Perhaps the inclusion of this discreet symbol of faith within Blakeslee's artistic signature helped to reconcile the moral dilemma of his conflicted identity as a meek exhibitionist. Whatever purpose it served, the uplifting wave was first invented in the process of designing the resurrection cover for *To Kiss the Crocodile,* and was forever afterwards used as the trademark signature of Blakeslee's professional artistic identity.

FREDERICK BLAKESLEE

Rudy Belarski claimed to have first "recruited" Fred Blakeslee to work for pulp magazines after becoming swamped with more freelance assignments than he could deliver, but, whether it was H. W. Scott or Belarski, the fact remains that Blakeslee's pen and ink story illustrations began to appear on the inside pages of pulp adventure magazines, and on September 26, 1929, his name first appeared on a pulp cover painting for *War Stories.* One month later, the shocking collapse of the stock market introduced the historic beginning of the Great Depression, and, ironically, the pulp magazine industry's greatest period of prosperity.

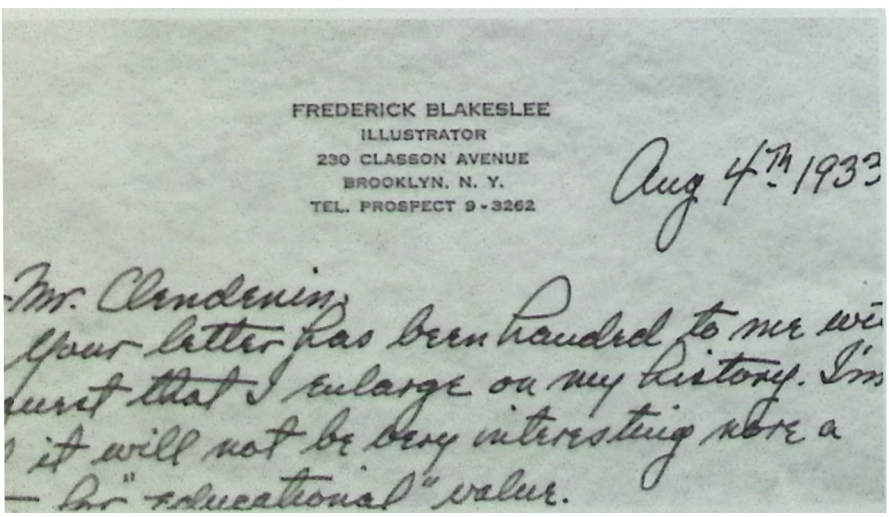
Fred was suddenly making good money from freelance assignments, along with his steady income from teaching at Pratt. He proposed marriage to the Reverend's daughter and she accepted his engagement ring. Lorna Jones had finished her own training at Pratt and was hired to work at the school library, so the happy fiancées were also professional co-workers. Every day the couple met for lunch and dinner at Lorna's home in the rectory of Saint Mary's Church. Lorna was devoted to her parents, who were both prominent community leaders with full schedules of social functions, funerals, weddings, and service as board members of charitable foundations. Mrs. & Rev. Dr. *J.* Clarence Jones socialized with international dignitaries, church officers, bankers, politicians, and philanthropists, such as John Pierpont Morgan, Jr., who was actively involved with the Episcopal Church. Cornelius Vanderbilt III allowed them to use his private railroad car on several occasions. Lorna's father had once even traveled to Bermuda on Vanderbilt's private yacht as the ship's chaplain. The Jones' rectory was a large Victorian home that continuously hosted formal affairs. It was decorated with antique furniture, Persian rugs, and colorful draperies. The fireplace was always aglow on cool or rainy days. The food was delicious and attractively served on fine china with gleaming silver. Both Dr. and Mrs. Jones were cordial hosts who charmed their guests with convivial attention. According to the diary account of one visitor, "Their house was alive with so much warm conversation and humor!" The rectory had a full staff. There was a cook, cleaning woman, upstairs and downstairs maids, and there had been nurses for their three children when they were young—Lorna, her older brother Stratford, and sister Roseanne. They had all been raised in the rectory and lacked for nothing. Lorna had life-sized porcelain dolls and even a fancy pony cart.

Unfortunately, Lorna had scarlet fever as a child, which left her with a rheumatic heart condition that chronically weakened her health. After accepting Fred's engagement ring,

their happy courtship was tragically disrupted when Lorna contracted tuberculosis, an often-fatal and extremely contagious disease. Suddenly the young lovers could not kiss, hold hands, or even breathe on each other. In the days before the antibiotic streptomycin, the only treatment for TB was years of isolated convalescence in a sanitarium where hygienic conditions, warm food, and fresh air helped the body's immune system long enough to destroy the bacteria. But even under the best conditions, this treatment was only partly effective-half of all TB sanitarium patients died within five years. Lorna was sent to upstate New York's Mount McGregor, the finest TB sanitarium in America. Fred wrote her love letters and visited on weekend trips by train. The sanatorium even had its own small-gauge railroad that traveled up to the top of the mountain from nearby Saratoga Springs. After two years Lorna was sent back home to the Brooklyn rectory for another year of bed rest, and the resumption of daily visits with Fred. When the family doctors finally decided Lorna was "cured," she and Fred were immediately married. Her father performed the ceremony in St. Mary's Church on June 21,1930. Fred was thirty-one and Lorna was twenty-five. The couple moved into a small well-furnished apartment on Hamilton Parkway in a fashionable part of Brooklyn. To preserve the domestic sanctity of their new home, Fred decided to have his studio separate from his living space, so he began looking for a business space to rent. Loma's mother insisted that Fred occupy the vacant third floor of the rectory, which Fred was happy to accept. To establish his new business address, he ordered gilt-lettered stationery, which identified the proprietor as, FREDERICK BLAKESLEE—ILLUSTRATOR, 230 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y., Telephone: Prospect 9-3262, thus becoming America's only classic illustrator to paint pulp magazine covers in an Episcopal rectory. Up until this time, Blakeslee had considered himself a technical draftsman, or a design teacher who dabbled in freelance work, but this new stationery marked the beginning of his professional career as an illustrator. During the Depression, most people learned to change their lives to follow any source of steady income, and the pulps were paying very handsomely.

Fred continued to teach at Pratt, but Lorna never returned to work as a librarian. Nonetheless, she and Fred drove back and forth to the rectory every day in his new Oldsmobile. While he taught across the street or painted upstairs in his studio, Lorna wrote letters, read books, or visited with her parent's formal guests. Fred and Lorna ate lunch and dinner at the rectory seven days-a-week. According to their sister-in-law, Mary Young Jones, who also lived in the rectory with her husband and son,

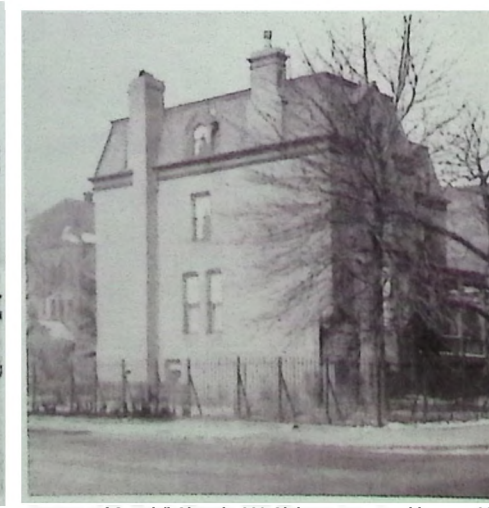
"Fred was tall and thin and a bundle of energy. Mrs. Jones could never break him of the habit of running up and down the long flights of stairs, taking two or three steps at a time up to his studio under the roof! She could also never break his habit of saying 'ruff' instead of'roof!' Fred was devoted to Lorna and thought she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen. He'd often jump from his chair in the drawing room and dash over and kiss her, saying how much he adored her. I never thought Lorna was pretty—she looked a lot like her mother, with crooked teeth, and a rather intense look on her face, but she was fairly tall—five feet five I expect, and very slim and graceful. She had style, and she sewed beautifully—her sewing work was stylish, and with her slim figure and tiny waist she always looked stunning. She ate very little and weighed under one hundred pounds. She had long curvy legs. Fred would say to anyone around, 'Lorna has the most beautiful legs I've ever seen—so sexy!' and Mrs. Jones would immediately take charge of the conversation! Lorna wore extremely high heels, and very expensive shoes, size 3,1 believe. While she wasn't 'beautiful' to my way of thinking, she was very attractive, very artistic. She had *presence,* I suppose you'd call it. She was very sophisticated and had poise. She had a good sense of humor, and was very original. She was a Junior League member, and went to many lunches with girl friends, and always looked stunning, with soft wavy black hair in a cloud around her face—and wore large-brimmed hats with flair."


FREDERICK BLAKESLEE
ILLUSTRATOR
230 CLASSON AVENUE
BROOKLYN, N. Y.
TEL. PROSPECT 9-3262

Aug 4th 1933

Mr. Clendenin,
Your letter has been handed to me wi
suit that I enlarge on my history. I'm
it will not be very interesting more a
— but "educational" value.

Blakeslee's prateulMil lattarhaad chowlnt Uw aMrau a, the chunk rectory


Rectory of SL Mir/i Church, 230 ClaiMn Ave., Brooklyn, c. 1931

Original cover illustration for *Dare-Devil Aces*, June, 1936. Photo courtesy of Robert Lesser

Original Illustration for Daw- *Devil Acts,* December, 1936. Oil on canvas, 30" 121'

Original cover Illustration for *Dare-Devil Aces,* October, 1934. Photo courtesy of Robert Lesser >

M
M
3
E
E 4177
FREDERICK
BLAKESLEE

Vintage belts wood airplane model kit, c. 19301

Vintage advertisement showing a model airplane shop, circa 1930s

In the fall of 1931, Fred and Loma took a honeymoon voyage to Europe on the White Star ocean liner, the S. S. *Homeric.* They visited families of both Lorna and Fred's maternal grandparents near London. Fred also used the trip to reacquaint himself with old friends from his years in aircraft design, who had since developed aviation careers in England, France, and Germany. Through these professional contacts, Blakeslee was able to familiarize himself with innovative design developments at air shows and airdromes, where he gathered material for his reference library of aviation notes, sketches, photos, and technical brochures.

During this sensational era of Charles Lindbergh, the market for aviation pulps was wildly competitive. Publishers produced forty-eight different titles of pulp aviation magazines. Lindbergh's transatlantic flight was a turning point in the self-image of modern man. Ancient earthly limitations were almost magically conquered by science and dedicated perseverance. Never before in history had civilization focused all acclaim on celebrating the triumph of one man and his faithful flying machine. Millions of children idolized the valiant aviator and wore homemade versions of his leather jacket, celluloid goggles and a windswept scarf. Kids were fascinated with the brand-new hobby of scale model aeroplanes. The balsa wood kits were displayed at local hobby stores, or available by mail order in magazine advertisements for a wide range of prices. The beauty of the finished product was a reflection of the model-maker's pride, so they were hand-decorated with carefully embellished details. This popular hobby inci eased the social importance of knowing the technical and historical accuracy of aircraft. Thanks to Blakeslee's intimate familiarity with the practices and principles of aviation design, his renderings of aircraft in dramatic action were a delight to both knowledgeable and novice readers.

A poignant example of that era's fascination with the technical details of aircraft is the artist's following response to a fan letter from a teenage aficionado.

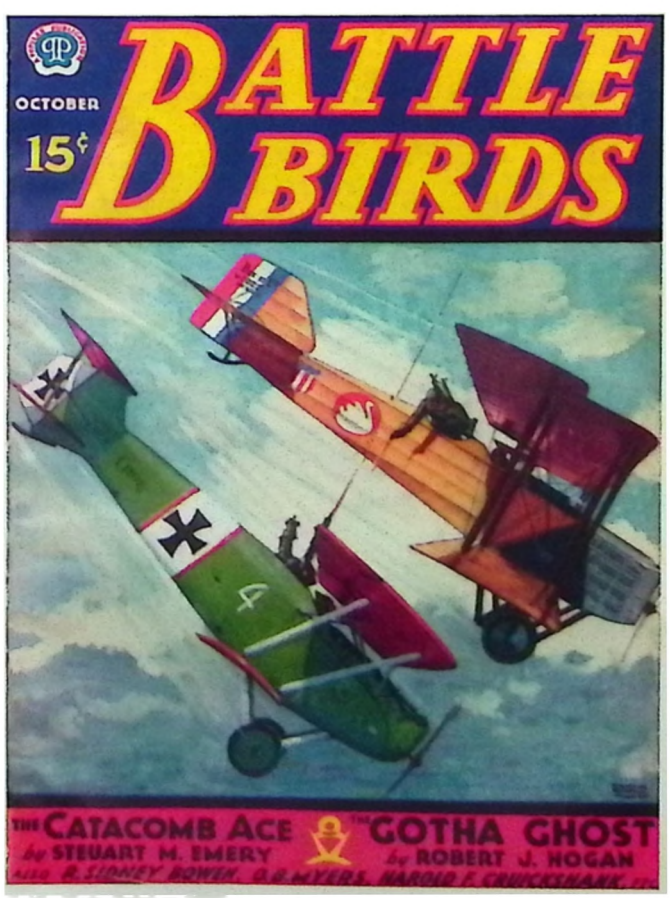
> "The mudguard on the Nieuport is a new one on me. I've seen many Nieuports in France, but never one with a mudguard. There was no reason to have them on tractor ships anyway. On some pusher types they were used to protect the propellers from flying mud, such as a Friedrichshofen Bomber where the propellers were directly behind the wheels. I'm inclined to think that the Nieuport with the mudguards was a freak flown by a pilot who was afraid of getting mud in his eye. You'll never see a mudguard on any Nieuport I draw.
>
> The wire screen you saw on the Friedrichshofen was another means of protecting the propellers. In the excitement of battle a gunner has been known to swing his guns around and shoot off his prop. The screen was put on so that couldn't happen.
>
> I think if you examine my drawing carefully you will find an even amount of fin surface upper and lower on the Bristol Fighter. If I drew it otherwise I'm ashamed of myself?

The technical authority in his portrayal of aircraft was a hit with enthusiastic readers who prided themselves on their encyclopedic knowledge of airplane details. Blakeslee's art skyrocketed to the height of popularity.

Soon he was creating cover art for most of the aviation pulp titles: *Battle Aces, Battle Birds, Dare-Devil Aces, Fighting Aces, Flyers, G-8 And His Battle Aces, Submarine Stories, War Aces,* and War *Birds.* He was widely considered among the best of his peers—Frank Tinsley, Rudolph Belarski, George Gross, James B. Settles, Charles Dameron, Eugene M. Frandzen, and the brothers August and Alex Schomburg. In addition to his paintings for cover assignments, Blakeslee drew over one thousand black-and-white interior story illustrations. He also created novel cartoon features such as *Would You Believe It!* and *Did You Know,* which he wrote under the alias "Larry Jones." Blakeslee privately admitted that the name "Laurence

Battle Birds, December, 1932

Battle Birds, February, 1933



Battle Birds, October, 1933

Dusty Ayres and his Battle Birds, August, 1934

G-5 and Ms *Battle* Aces, February, 1934

G-8 and *His Battle* Aces, November, 1934

GS »mi His Bettie Aces, January, 1935

G-8 and His Battle Aces, May, 1935

G-8 and His Battle Aces, February, 1936

G-8 and His Battle Aces, March, 1936

G-8 and His Battle Aces, April, 1936

G-8 and His Battle Aces, August, 1936

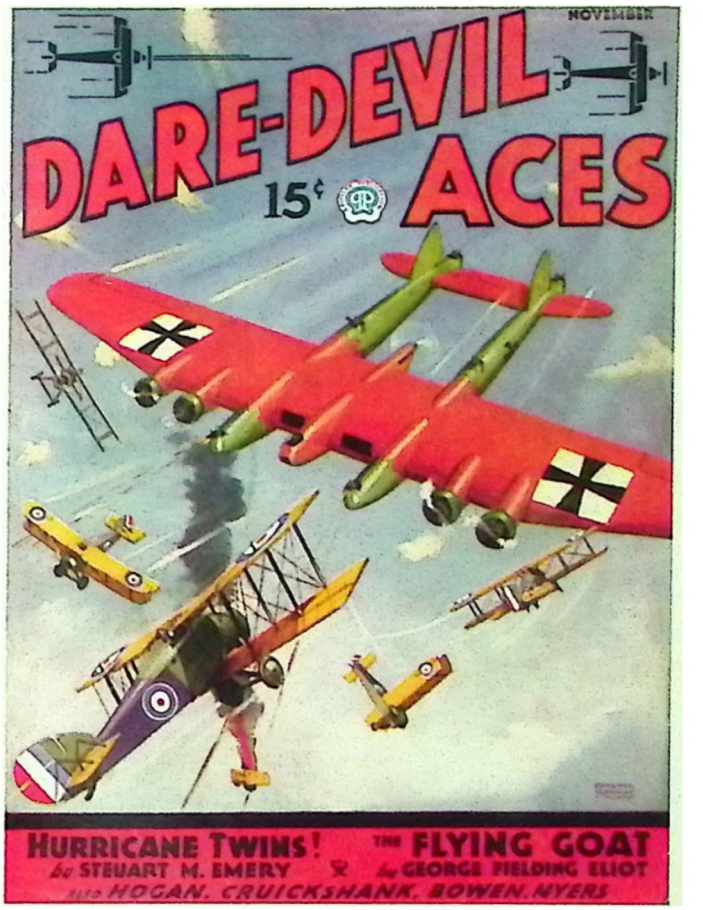
G-8 and His Battle Aces, December, 1936

G-8 and His Battle Aces, July, 1938

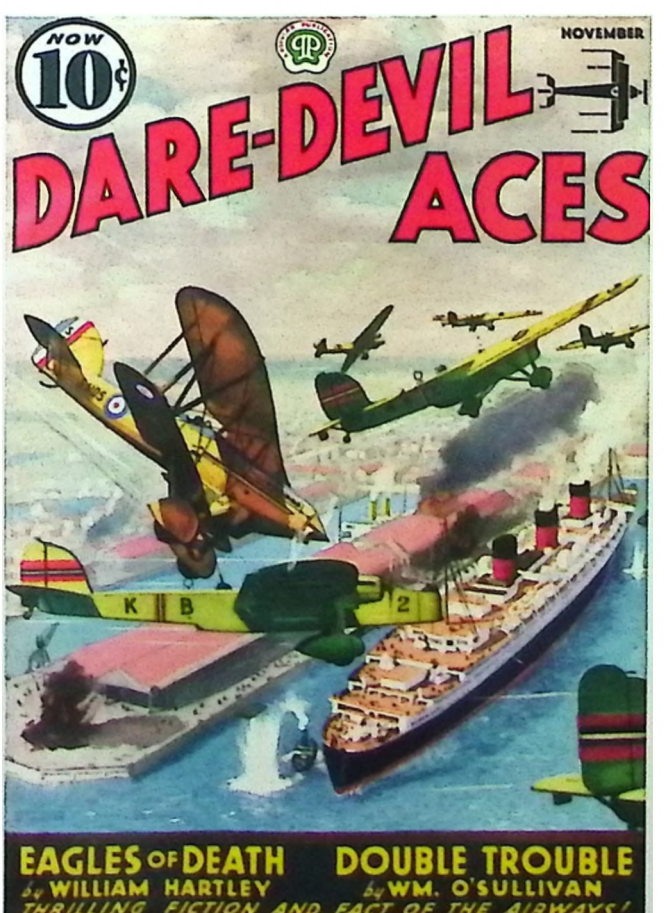
G-8 *and His Battle Aces,* June, 1941

G-8 and His Battle Aces, October, 1943

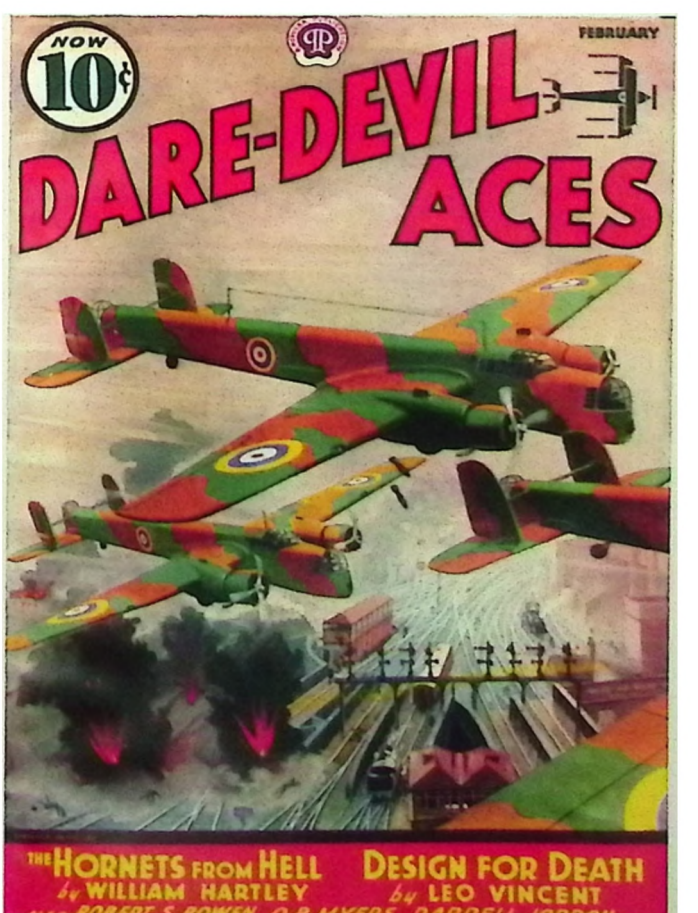
Dare-Devil Aces, December, 1932



Dan-Devil Aces, November, 1935



Dare-Devil Aces, November, 1935



Dare-Devil Aces, February, 1936

Original cover Illustration tor Dare-Devil Aces, September 1939. Photo courtesy of Jim Steranko

Original cover Illustration for *Battle Aces,* November, 1932. Photo courtesy of The Illustration House, Inc.

Original cover Illustration for Dare-Devil Aces, October 1935. Photo courtesy of The IUustraUon House, Inc.

Original cover Illustration for Dare-Devil Aces, November 1933. Photo courtesy of The Illustration House, Inc.

Original cover Illustration for *Dare-Devil Aces,* November, 1934. Photo courtesy of The Illustration House, Inc.

JJ» *Ships ami Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet*, 1939

Jones" was derived from his father-in-law's name, the Rev. Dr. J. Clarence Jones.

By 1934, the artist had developed his closest business relationship with the pulp publisher Harry Steeger at Popular Publications, where the major portion of the artists' subsequent work would appear. Blakeslee's art career had grown too demanding, too successful, and too lucrative to permit him to continue teaching at Pratt, so he was compelled to stop teaching in order to concentrate on studio production.

Harry Steeger was the world's greatest patron of Blakeslee's artistic vision, and he relied on him to consistently produce the finest aviation covers for Popular Publications. But Steeger was also interested in motivating Fred to produce ever-greater coveis by encouraging him to collaborate with the narrative gifts of his best aviation authors. This pressure helped to generate many ot Blakeslee's most sensational paintings, which would have never existed without the challenge of Steeger's creative input, but it also made work more stressful. Fred's workload became even more demanding in 1934 when Lorna again came down with symptoms of tuberculosis. She needed peace and quiet, warm foods and fresh air, but instead of pi CM j ibing an isolated TB sanitarium, the family doctors suggested she try an ocean voyage. Fred and Lorna welcomed the suggestion and, in September, they took a second European tour—this time steaming on the S. S. *Pennland* of the Red Star Lines. The artist again visited his aviation contacts in Europe to research new design developments in aircraft at air shows in Paris, London and Berlin, but on this trip the artist was embarrassed to be greeted as a celebrity in his own right. Thanks to worldwide magazine distribution, Frederick M. Blakeslee had become a famous name in the world of aviation art.

As the skies across the world darkened with the evil squadrons of Fascism, the public's interest in air warfare grew more intense with each new merciless bombardment of a civilian population. From Guernica in 1937, to the Japanese bombing of Chungking in 1938; the blitzkrieg invasion of Poland in 1939; the Luftwaffe's London blitz in 1940; the Japanese bombings of Canton, Nanking, and their infamous attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941—and America's subsequent declaration of war—the entire world was eager for stories about heroic avenger-aviators, and Blakeslee was the best man to illustrate those daring exploits.

Although his age disqualified him for military service in World War II, the artist worked at his easel to support the morale of American servicemen. To demonstrate the significance of Blakeslee's art in the minds of his public in 1942, consider the following letter from an air cadet written to the editors of *Battle Birds:* "If you could possibly spare us a Blakeslee, I promise it would occupy a prominent space on our barracks wall. Undoubtedly it would be an incentive to all the men within, and might even be the crucial thing that helps us to win the war by spurring us all on to do our best. How about it?"—Pvt. A.E.F., Georgia. To which Steeger responded, "Far be it from the Great Greaseball to sabotage the nation's war effort by being tight-fisted with the Blakeslees. Keep your eyes on the company mail bag, soldier—there's a big beautiful Blakeslee winging its way to you!—The Publishers."

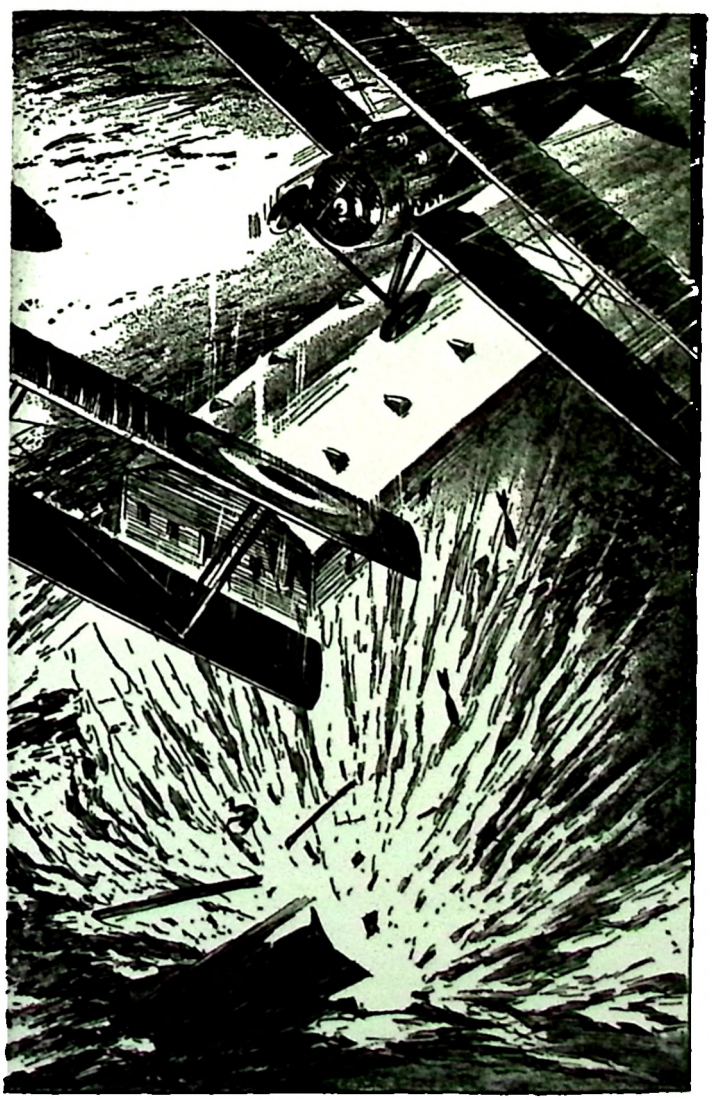
The artist valued fan letters from his public and thoughtfully responded to each one. All artists long for recognition, but freelance illustrators rarely get to meet their audience. Pulp artists painted for cheap, disposable magazines with a newsstand "shelf-life" of only a few days. The artists' only feedback was from art directors and other illustrators, whose comments were often distorted by personal prejudice, so fan letters were gratefully appreciated. A West Virginia high school student named Kenny Clendenin wrote such meaningful letters to Blakeslee that the two became lifelong correspondents.

In 1943 an Air Force cadet wrote a letter to the publishers asking why Blakeslee's black-and-white drawings had begun to look blurry and indistinct. This observant fan soon received a few drawings as a friendly gift, and a hand-written response from Blakeslee himself, explaining, "My previous drawings used a pen and ink process, but our production materials have become very scarce with the war, so I have started using an old-fashioned lithographic crayon instead for my latest efforts. This is why the new black and white drawings lack the clarity of my earlier illustrations."

Interior Illustration for *Dare-Devil Aces,* December, 1932

Interior Illustration for *G-8 anti His Battle Aces,* April, 1939

Interior Illustration for *G-8 and His Battle* Aces, April, 1939



Story Behind the Cover

WELL, guys—when I brought in this month's cover for Dare-Devil, the editors began to climb out the windows, slide down drain pipes and phone for the Army and Navy. Why? For a very good reason: we are bombing New York City.

Of course, I don't think that day will ever arrive, and the fact that I have Japanese ships opposing the Americans who are allied with the British, really means nothing at all. We simply want to look at these rather interesting planes, and thought it would be fun to give them an unusual setting. I have marked off these crates on the sketch above, so that you may check them with the cover.

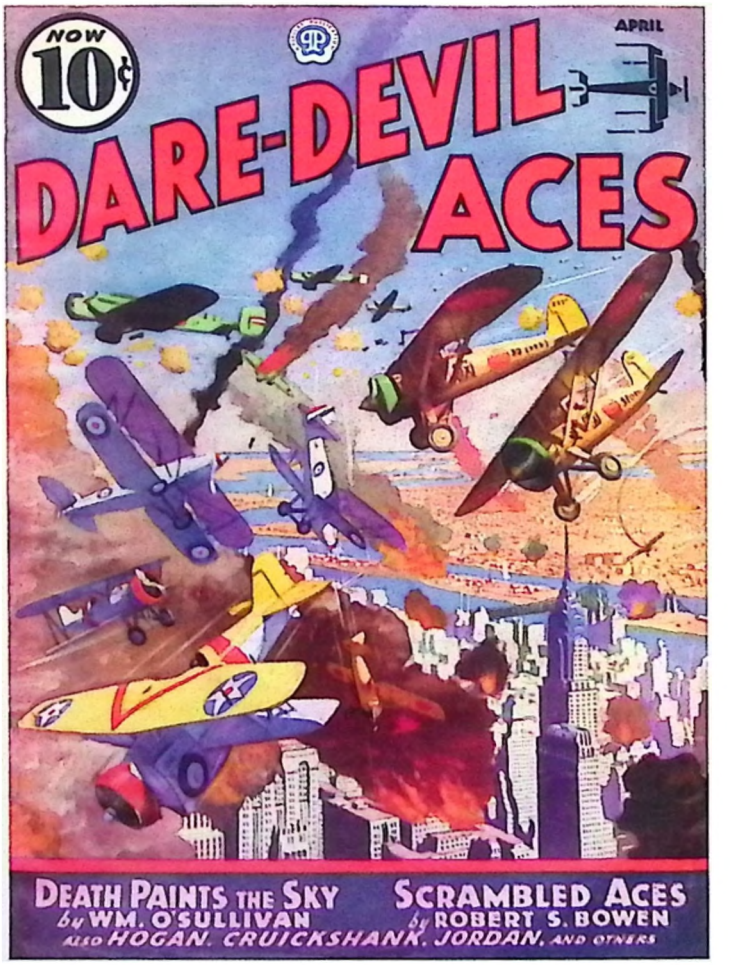
Numbers 2, 3 and 8, as you probably know, are the Japanese Nakajima single-seater Army fighters. These high-wing braced monoplanes are powered by 450 h.p. Nakajima "Jupiter" radial air-cooled engines, which give them a speed of 198 m.p.h.

Plane number 1, is the Kawasaki long-distance bomber, type 93. This is moved along by two Kawasaki B.M.W. engines, at a rate of 220 m.p.h. Its ceiling is 16,400 feet.

Numbers 4 and 5 are British Hawkers, with which you are all well acquainted. I guess I just like those crates, because I can't paint a cover without sticking one or two along the skyline.

Number 6 is the Boeing P-12E single-seat fighter, with a speed of 189 m.p.h., while number 7 is the Curtiss "Hawk" BF2C-1 single-seat fighter which can do at least 209 m.p.h.

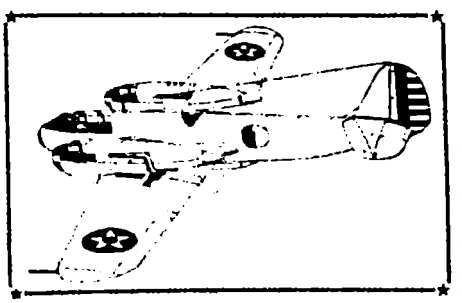
But perhaps those of you who have never been to New York would like to learn a thing or two concerning the big town. Of course, you must recognize the Chrysler Building (A), which is at 42nd street and Lexington Avenue. (B), represents the famous Lincoln Building, while (C), pity the poor tenants, is the Chanin Building, which has lost its roof in our cover scene. However, the one detail that bothers the editorial staff of Popular Publications most, is the building designated by (D). This is where the guys have to work, and they don't like the idea a little bit. In fact, since they are friends of mine, I think I'll call off this particular war.



"Story Behind the Cover" Illustration for *Dare-Devil Aces*, April, 1937

ASEMBLIT

By FREDERICK BLAKESLEE

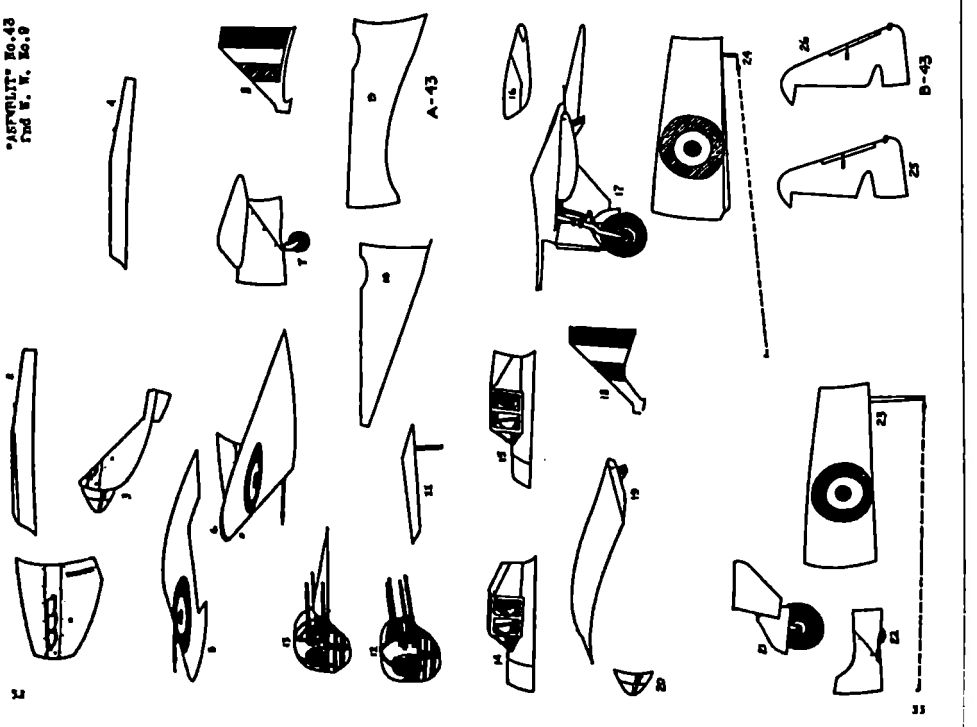


ABOVE you will find the solution to last month's puzzle. It is a new six-gun U. S. Army ship, the Bell YSM-1, a twin-engined pusher, multi-place fighter. Perhaps some of you saw this ship at the New York World's Fair.

On page 52 you will find this month's puzzler. I don't mind admitting that it is a hard one. Study the units and perhaps you will catch on. I'll say no more. I have numbered the units to make it easier. Next month you will find the solution.

Remember, this one is a sticker, and it's different than anything you've ever seen in this department before. So go ahead, now, and try to assemblit.

51



"ASEMBLIT" Illustration for *Dare-Devil Aces*, January, 1941

Another noteworthy development of Blakeslee's career was his novel invention of *ASSEMBLIT*, a full-page puzzle of scrambled plane parts. Kids were challenged to make their own tracings of these detailed diagrams and cut them out and assemble their own jig-saw puzzle aircraft. These pages regularly appeared in *Dare-Devil Aces* and were listed as a feature on the contents page. Blakeslee also had another black-and-white feature entitled, *STORY BEHIND THE COVER*, which reproduced a silhouette of the aeroplanes on the cover of the magazine, with technical descriptions of the aircraft. One remarkable thing about *ASSEMBLIT* and *STORY BEHIND THE COVER* is how well they demonstrate the artist's background as a drafting engineer. In fact, the artist was a sensitive, low-key, mild-mannered personality who confided to friends that he hated to paint the more garish scenes that were so often required by the pulp industry. Another unique quality of Blakeslee's pulp covers is that they are singularly devoid of damsels in distress. This extraordinary omission may be partly explained by the fact that the artist's studio was located in the rectory of St. Mary's Church, where one did not expect to find the usual sorts of saucy displays that were so brazenly flaunted at newsstands.

By the time Lorna's father, Rev. Clarence Jones, retired from St. Mary's Church, his career had advanced through the hierarchy of Episcopal Church elders. He was given the title of rector emeritus and he retained the presidency of the standing committee of the Long Island Diocese, as well as the chairmanship of the board of examining chaplains of the diocese. He was also the chancellor of the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City, where the diocesan bishop presides. So at the age of 80, his remaining church duties shifted from Brooklyn to Long Island.

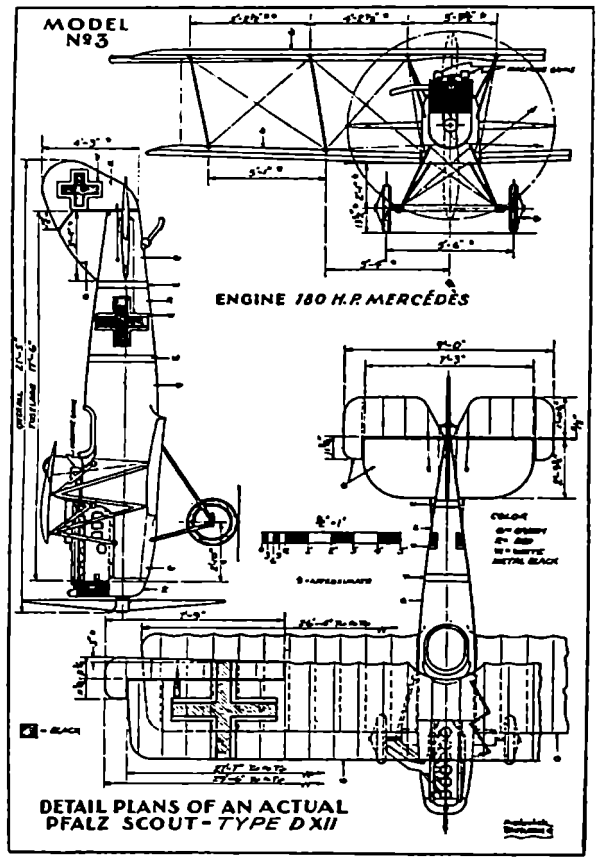


Diagram from *Battle Birds*, February, 1933

WoW-Art · WoW-Art · WoW-Art

MEMORABLE FANTASY, SCIENCE FICTION AND EXCITING GENRE ILLUSTRATIVE ART

WORLDS OF WONDER—P.O. BOX 814, McLEAN VA, 22101

TEL: 703-847-4251 FAX: 703-790-9519 EMAIL: WOWART@WOW-ART.COM

40 PAGE FULL-COLOR CATALOG AVAILABLE FOR $15.00 – $20 INTL.

VISIT US ON THE WEB: WWW.WOW-ART.COM

Original Interior Illustration for Argosy, December, 1949

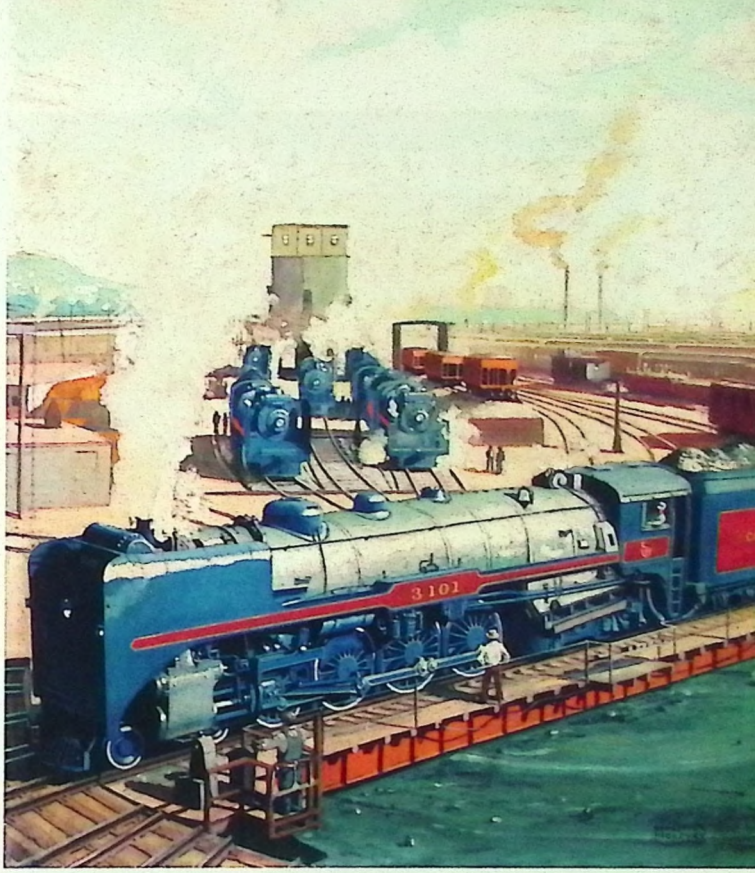
To spare her father the long drive, and to be closer to her aging parents, Lorna and Fred bought a house on Long Island near the Episcopal Cathedral, and Lorna's parents spent the remainder of their lives in Fred's home. Fred packed up his art studio in the rectory and moved everything into a spare bedroom on the second floor. Fred and Lorna still ate their meals with her parents and, in the evenings, Lorna would usually go for a drive with Fred. Although this was a swanky section of Long Island, the Blakeslees lived in an average middle-class home. One neighbor who became a good friend was the author Christopher Morley, who wrote the bestseller *Kitty I'oyh'*, which became a Hollywood motion picture and won an academy award for Ginger Rogers.

The Blakeslees also enjoyed being closer to their circle of social and business friends on Long Island—Waller and his wife "Pete" Baumhofer, Ernest and Katherine Chiriacka, and Harry and Shirley Steeger. Years later, the Steegers would recall that they were en route to dinner with the Blakeslees when they heard the news over the car radio of Franklin D. Roosevelt's death. Steeger owned a yacht and Blakeslee owned a small sailboat. They both spent weekends cruising the coastline and had volunteered for civil defense coastal patrol during the war. This meant keeping a vigilant lookout for U-boats, and radio reports to the U. S. Coast Guard. Although they never saw any Nazi submarines (or as the Germans say, *"Unterseeboots")* Steeger and Blakelsee were both keen to share stories of their nautical exploits on the Long Island Sound.

Fred was inspired to express those feelings in a series of maritime paintings, some of which Steeger published in *Argosy* magazine. When comparing Blakeslee's ship paintings writh his more renowned paintings of airplanes and trains, it becomes clear that the artist treated all three subjects with the same unique viewpoint—a scene of tiny men heroically struggling with massive machinery in an otherwise awesome vista. The artist's fondness for compositions that emphasize mankind's tiny insignificance in proportion to vast clashes of natural and mechanical forces suggests that Frederick Blakeslee philosophically agreed with the Romantic's view of the Industrial Age. Painters of the Romantic movement—Caspar David Friedrich, J.M.W. Turner, John Constable, Thomas Cole, and Winslow Homer, for example—all painted visions of tiny men heroically struggling in a world of overwhelming forces.

In 1943, Popular Publications bought *Railroad Magazine*, and Blakeslee was able to fulfill another youthful aspiration. Ever since his Buffalo childhood, the artist had been

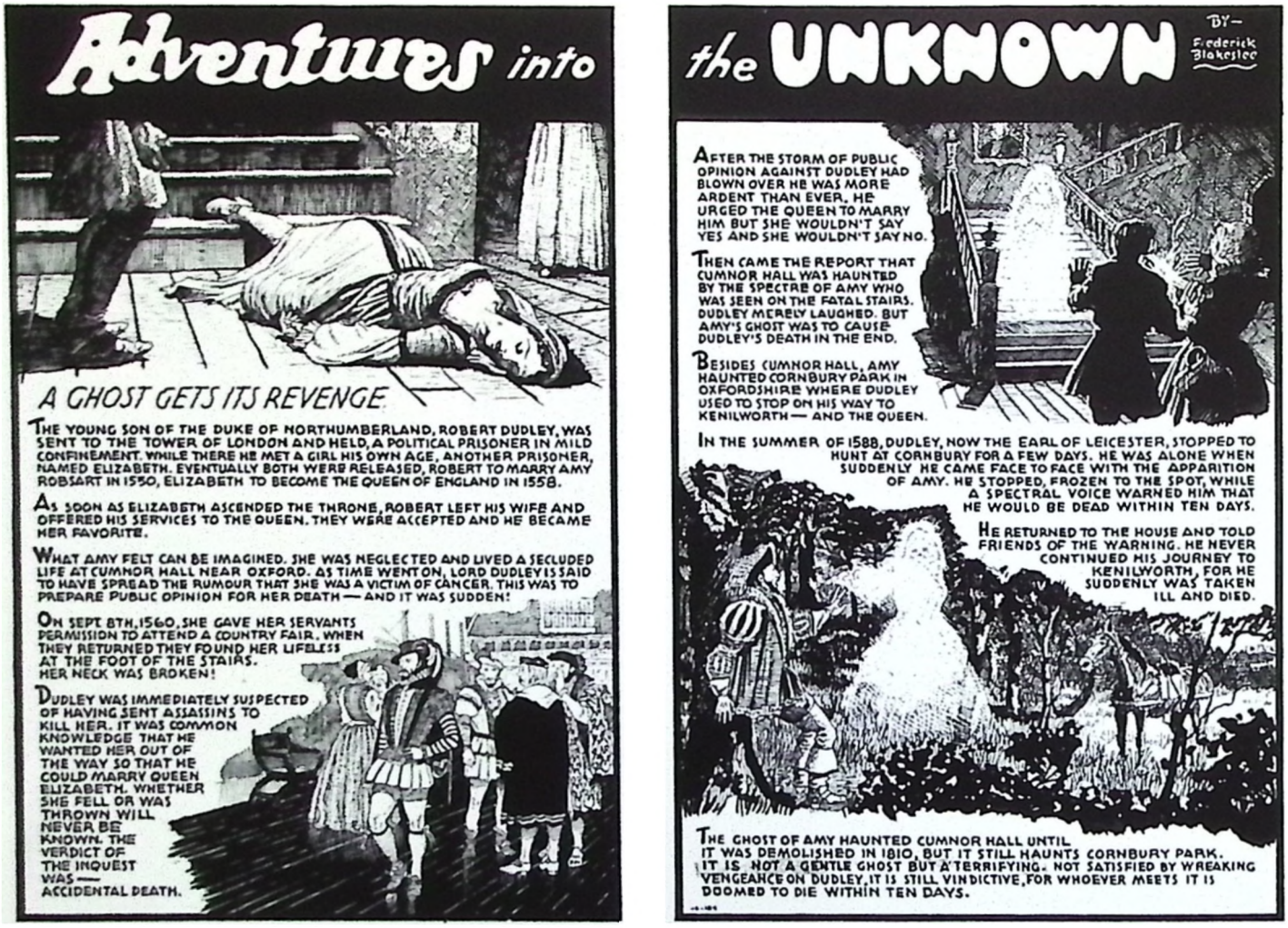
Original cover Illustration for *Railroad Magazine,* May, 1949. Photo courtesy of Andrea Brock



Original cover Illustration for *Railroad Magazine,* August, 1950. Photo courtesy of Andrea Brock

Original covar Illustration for *Railroad Magazine,* February, 1949. Photo courtesy of Andrea Brock

Original cover Illustration for *Railroad Magazine,* July, 1948. Photo courtesy of Andrea Brock


Adventures into
A GHOST GETS ITS REVENGE
THE YOUNG SON OF THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND, ROBERT DUDLEY, WAS SENT TO THE TOWER OF LONDON AND HELD, A POLITICAL PRISONER IN MILD CONFINEMENT. WHILE THERE HE MET A GIRL HIS OWN AGE, ANOTHER PRISONER, NAMED ELIZABETH. EVENTUALLY BOTH WERE RELEASED, ROBERT TO MARRY AMY ROBSART IN 1550, ELIZABETH TO BECOME THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND IN 1558.
AS SOON AS ELIZABETH ASCENDED THE THRONE, ROBERT LEFT HIS WIFE AND OFFERED HIS SERVICES TO THE QUEEN. THEY WERE ACCEPTED AND HE BECAME HER FAVORITE.
WHAT AMY FELT CAN BE IMAGINED. SHE WAS NEGLECTED AND LIVED A SECLUDED LIFE AT CUMNOR HALL NEAR OXFORD. AS TIME WENT ON, LORD DUDLEY IS SAID TO HAVE SPREAD THE RUMOUR THAT SHE WAS A VICTIM OF CANCER. THIS WAS TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION FOR HER DEATH — AND IT WAS SUDDEN!
ON SEPT 8TH, 1560, SHE GAVE HER SERVANTS PERMISSION TO ATTEND A COUNTRY FAIR. WHEN THEY RETURNED THEY FOUND HER LIFELESS AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS. HER NECK WAS BROKEN!
DUDLEY WAS IMMEDIATELY SUSPECTED OF HAVING SENT ASSASSINS TO KILL HER. IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT HE WANTED HER OUT OF THE WAY SO THAT HE COULD MARRY QUEEN ELIZABETH. WHETHER SHE FELL OR WAS THROWN WILL NEVER BE KNOWN. THE VERDICT OF THE INQUEST WAS — ACCIDENTAL DEATH.
the UNKNOWN
BY — Frederick Blakeslee
AFTER THE STORM OF PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST DUDLEY HAD BLOWN OVER HE WAS MORE ARDENT THAN EVER. HE URGED THE QUEEN TO MARRY HIM BUT SHE WOULDN'T SAY YES AND SHE WOULDN'T SAY NO.
THEN CAME THE REPORT THAT CUMNOR HALL WAS HAUNTED BY THE SPECTRE OF AMY WHO WAS SEEN ON THE FATAL STAIRS. DUDLEY MERELY LAUGHED. BUT AMY'S GHOST WAS TO CAUSE DUDLEY'S DEATH IN THE END.
BESIDES CUMNOR HALL, AMY HAUNTED CORNBURY PARK IN OXFORDSHIRE WHERE DUDLEY USED TO STOP ON HIS WAY TO KENILWORTH — AND THE QUEEN.
IN THE SUMMER OF 1588, DUDLEY, NOW THE EARL OF LEICESTER, STOPPED TO HUNT AT CORNBURY FOR A FEW DAYS. HE WAS ALONE WHEN SUDDENLY HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THE APPARITION OF AMY. HE STOPPED, FROZEN TO THE SPOT, WHILE A SPECTRAL VOICE WARNED HIM THAT HE WOULD BE DEAD WITHIN TEN DAYS.
HE RETURNED TO THE HOUSE AND TOLD FRIENDS OF THE WARNING. HE NEVER CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY TO KENILWORTH, FOR HE SUDDENLY WAS TAKEN ILL AND DIED.
THE GHOST OF AMY HAUNTED CUMNOR HALL UNTIL IT WAS DEMOLISHED IN 1810, BUT IT STILL HAUNTS CORNBURY PARK. IT IS NOT A GENTLE GHOST BUT A TERRIFYING. NOT SATISFIED BY WREAKING VENGEANCE ON DUDLEY, IT IS STILL VINDICTIVE, FOR WHOEVER MEETS IT IS DOOMED TO DIE WITHIN TEN DAYS.

'Adventures Into the Unknown,' from 15 *Mystery Stories*, June, 1950

fascinated by steam locomotives, and these new cover assignments finally allowed his vision of the iron horse to move out from the backgrounds of his aviation covers and steam full-throttle into the center stage of his fifty-one cover paintings for *Railroad Magazine.* These feature impressive portraits of a wide range of locomotive engines and rolling stock in discerning situations. Blakeslee composed the shapes and colors of these covers with a mastery of formal inventiveness, which elevates these paintings to his highest level of technical accomplishment.

During the post-war period, everyone involved in publishing had to adapt to changing tastes. While Blakeslee had plenty of assignments to paint railroad covers. Popular Publications sent the last issue of an aviation pulp to the newsstands in November 1940, marking the end of Blakeslee's career in pulp aviation. Suddenly the artist needed more income. He was considering an ambitious plan for a new career as a syndicated cartoonist, with a topical version of his earlier senes Would Ion *Relieve It!,* winch was itself a revision of the classic series *Ripley's Relieve It Or Not.* By 1947. Blakeslee's pen and-ink two page spreads, with comparably incredible-but tiue histone tacts, were regularly appearing in Popular Publications magazines. He received a featured byline, listed on the contents pages of several Western, adventure, detective and horror pulps, such as *Pecos Kid Western, 15 Mystery Stories, New Detective, Dime Mystery* and *Shock.* His Western version was called *The Roaring Towns-,* the adventure version *Accent on Adventure;* the detective version *Strange Trails to Murder,* and the horror version *Adventures into the Unknown.* They were all fairly gruesome, in keeping with the custom of popular culture in those hardboiled post-war years. The artist sought but did not receive nationwide syndication for this inventive cartoon concept. In 1949, Blakeslee did receive several assignments from King Features Syndicate to illustrate a short-lived mystery detective series that was distributed in Hearst newspapers in serialized installments. Unfortunately, *Adventures into the Unknown* was the same title as an infamous comic book, produced by the American Comics Group, which was one of the more horrifying comics ever marketed to children. That same comic was famously vilified by Dr. Frederick Wertham during Estes Kefauver's Senate hearings on indecency in comic books, and their impact on adolescent delinquency. In response, the publishing industry imposed strict new guidelines for self-censorship in 1953, so the comic book code of decency put an end to Blakeslee's dream of a syndicated comic strip.

The June 1951 issue of *Railroad Magazine* was the last pulp published with a Blakeslee cover. Harry Steeger followed the

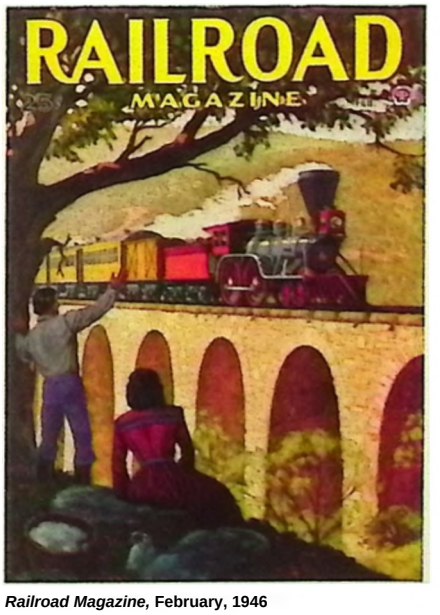
Railroad Magazine, **April, 1943**

Railroad Magazine, **August, 1943**

Railroad Magazine, **December, 1943**

Railroad Magazine, **November, 1944**

Railroad Magazine, **January, 1946**



Railroad Magazine, **February, 1946**

Railroad Magazine, **February, 1948**

Railroad Magazine, **October, 1948**

Railroad Magazine, **June, 1951**

illustration 43

IWo unidentified Illustrations, circa 1948 to 1949

public, whose reading habits were moving away from the pulps and toward the men's adventure magazines, of which *Argosy* became his bestseller. Blakeslee received occasional assignments for that magazine, but he was no longer able to depend on a steady income from Popular Publications. Through his connections with Baumhofer and Chiriacka, who were both under contract with American Artist Agency, Blakeslee received a few freelance assignments for *American Weekly Magazine,* but although these jobs paid better than the pulps, there were only sporadic assignments. The layout and composition of most slick illustrations were predetermined by art directors, and the scenes were typically a human-interest drama involving interacting personalities. Blakeslee's finished product for slick magazines was mediocre, probably because of his lifelong lack of interest in painting people. Although he had worked in the pulps as long as his old classmates from art school days, Blakeslee had shied away from painting scenes that depended on live models. As a result, his work was not in the same league as other top illustrators. Belarski, Chiriacka, and Baumhofer were all able to secure lucrative long-term contracts with slick magazines, and they managed to earn superior incomes after the end of the pulp magazine market.

Blakeslee needed more income. John Fleming Gould was a friend and neighbor, as well as an old classmate from Pratt. Alter his own distinguished career as a pulp illustrator, Gould had found steady work creating over 200 designs for a Long Island ceramics manufacturer, Delano Studios. Delano asked Gould to paint some images for a series of decorative plates to commemorate the early history of the railroad in the vintage Americana style of Currier & Ives. Gould kindly suggested Delano hire Blakeslee as a specialist in railroad art. Fred was grateful for the opportunity and was soon regularly producing freelance assignments for Delano Studios. They used an advanced process of printing screened images onto gelatin-backed decals with ceramic glazes. The dried decals were then applied to ceramic objects and fired in a low-temperature kiln. Delano produced commemorative plates, ashtrays, and other items for the gift shops in hundreds of national historic landmarks, including the White House. Although these collectibles were marketed as artistic "hand-painted" ceramics, they were actually manufactured in an assembly line. Blakeslee was hired to make the original paintings, which were reproduced in this innovative process. It was easy work because Delano Studios was close to Fred's Long Island home, but these were simple low-paying jobs, and the Blakeslees still needed more income.

Design for Delano Studios, 1949

In 1949 he offered his drafting services to his old friends in the design department at Sperry Gyroscope. The company had since outgrown their Brooklyn plant and moved into a gigantic new facility on Long Island built for them by the government during WWII. Remarkably, the Sperry Gyroscope complex in Lake Success also housed the United Nations from 1946 until they moved into their landmark building on the East River of midtown Manhattan in 1951. Blakeslee was hired by Sperry to produce technical drawings from engineer's design-specifics for precision equipment for aviation, radar, submarine detection systems, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and anti-ballistic missile systems. Ironically, Blakeslee was hired to do design work on Sperry's advanced missile systems twenty-five years after his last design work on the first Curtiss-Sperry Aerial Bomb Project. It must have been an incredible challenge for the "old timer" to adjust to the space-age environment at the new Sperry design department, but at least his financial problems were solved. Considering the threat of Soviet espionage in those Cold War years, Blakeslee's security clearance had to have been top secret. His remaining years of employment were spent at a drafting table under fluorescent lighting in the enormous military-industrial complex in Lake Success, which in 1955 was renamed the Sperry Rand Corporation.

Every summer Fred received a month of paid vacation, so the Blakeslees decided to a buy a summerhouse in New England. Fred and Lorna had usually summered with her parents in a friend's Victorian estate in Poughkeepsie. Fred had always enjoyed the diversion of taking the family on car trips to explore the region, and they had discovered the majesty of the White Mountains in Vermont. Lorna and Fred had first admired the region from the mountaintop panorama on Mount McGregor in 1927 during their unusually abstinent but romantic two-year courtship at the TB sanitarium, so the area held both restful and sentimental associations. They found an old-fashioned New England farmhouse in Danville with an attached barn that the artist intended to convert into a painting studio, but according to his friendly neighbors, "Fred didn't know which end of a hammer to pick up." So instead

The Blakeslee summer home In New England, CT

SO MUCH LIKE REAL PULPS, YOU CAN ALMOST SMELL THEM.
Pulp Replica Editions
Complete facsimile reprints of the entire pulp, right off the original pages. Hand assembled to look just like pulps.
Over 20 titles, more than 150 different issues! 3 new/month.
NOT JUST A REPRINT... IT'S A REPLICA.
THE SPIDER
MASTER OF MEN!
LEGIONS OF MADNESS
The MAGIC CARPET MAGAZINE
MYSTERY
SATAN'S MISTRESS
Weird Tales
GIRASOL COLLECTABLES
3501 Glen Erin Drive, Suite 1409, Mississauga, ON, Canada L5L 2E9 Visits by app't.
905.820.7572 www.girasolcollectables.com info@girasolcollectables.com

Oil on canvas, 1964. Photo courtesy of Andrea Brock

Oil on canvas, 1972. Photo courtesy of Andrea Brock

of risking his thumb, Fred "renovated" the kitchen by painting charming floral decorations on the cupboards, walls, and trim, which were a delight to Lorna.

The Blakeslees had no children but after twenty years of correspondence with one particular fan, Fred had developed a paternal bond with Kenny Clendenin. During summer vacations, Kenny visited the Blakeslee home in Vermont with his wife and daughter, and, in turn, Fred visited Kenny's home in Parkersburg, West Virginia, where the Clendenin family had worked for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad for several generations. Kenny pulled a few strings and the artist was treated to the deluxe B & O tour, usually reserved for visiting dignitaries. Fred was outfitted in an official B & O engineer's hat, gloves, brakeman's lamp, and was allowed to sit in the driver's seat and operate the behemoth diesel train on a regular freight run. It was a thrilling experience for the little boy from Buffalo who was a lifelong train enthusiast.

By 1963, Lorna's parents had passed away, and the urban sprawl from New York City had reached Roslyn Heights, bringing traffic congestion, higher taxes, and doubled property values. Lorna had heart surgery and the operation was a "success" but a

LITTLETON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Btakeslec'i last published Illustration, 1972

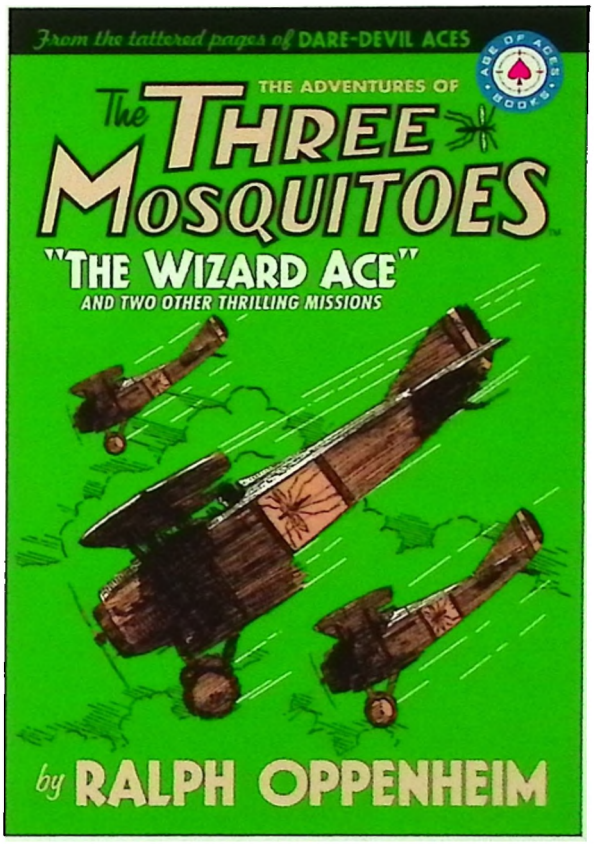
Frederick and Loma Blakeslee, 1957

loosened blood clot caused a stroke that impaired her mental clarity and paralyzed her left leg. She also developed diabetes. Fred was sixty-four, so he decided it was time to retire. They sold their Long Island home and permanently moved to their summerhouse. They lived a modest life, attending the All Saints Episcopal Church in Littleton, New Hampshire, where the artist was happy to contribute his design services to the church bulletins and pamphlets.

One noteworthy instance of the nurturing role that fandom can play in cheering up retired pulp artists occurred in 1964 when Kenny Clendenin suggested making 35mm color-slide photographs of a select group of twenty original Blakeslee paintings and then offering to manage the sale of duplicate copies through an advertisement in the *Cross & Cockade Journal*, a World War I aero history fanzine whose readers appreciated Blakeslee's aviation art. This promotional project was a thrill for Fred. For the first time in twenty years, he was getting fan mail again. He was delighted to connect with the few fans that remembered his pulp cover art and wrote to express their heartfelt admiration.

Blakeslee's retirement years were spent in a relaxed country village, where the artist was free to drive around the White Mountain

Oil on canvas, 1972. Photo courtesy of Andrea Brock


From the tattered pages of DARE-DEVIL ACES
THE ADVENTURES OF
The THREE MOSQUITOES
"THE WIZARD ACE"
AND TWO OTHER THRILLING MISSIONS
by RALPH OPPENHEIM

The Adventures of The Three *Mosquitoes*, 2007

National Forest with his folding French easel and discover charming scenes for the traditional Americana landscape paintings that occupied his creative energies during the final decade of his life.

On March 5, 1973, Frederick Manley Blakeslee died of a heart attack at age 74. *The Littleton Courier* published the following obituary:

"Fred M. Blakelsee died Monday at the Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital in Hanover, N.H. He was born in Buffalo, N.Y. December 4, 1898, the son of Manley and Bertha Blakeslee. A graduate of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., he became well known as an illustrator specializing in railroads and aviation subjects. His work appeared regularly on the covers of *Argosy* magazine and other popular publications. Following World War II, Mr. Blakeslee served as a technical draftsman for Sperry Rand at Lake Success, N.Y. for fifteen years. On his retirement in 1963 he moved to New England.

"He is survived by his widow, Lorna Blakeslee. Rev. Carleton Schaller will conduct a funeral service in All Saints' Episcopal Church in Littleton at 3:30 pm Friday, March 9. In lieu of flowers, it is suggested that those wishing to, may make a contribution to All Saints' Episcopal Church in his memory."

Lorna moved to Pine Knoll nursing home three miles north of Danville, where she died five years later on March 29,1978, at the age of 73.

Frederick M. Blakeslee was a pulp art master. Besides his cover art, more than a thousand of his pen and ink illustrations were published. But his most remarkable career achievement was to dominate the field of aviation pulps to such an extent that his covers appeared on all issues of the complete runs of five different pulp magazine titles —in such a competitive industry, that is an amazing feat which no other artist can claim. Blakeslee painted 423 pulp covers. Three-hundred-and-six of his covers appeared on every issue of *Battle Birds*, *Captain Combat*, *Dare-Devil Aces*, *Dusty Ayres and His Battle Birds*, and *G-8 and His Battle Aces*. Those same classic covers continue to reappear on today's paperback editions and pulp reprints. Blakeslee left behind a legacy of images that inspire his viewers to share his vision of soaring through sunny skies, rife with mid-air collisions, and finding a state of grace in the ratified air, where life is colorfully poised in a tranquil, weightless, and ordered delight. The artist has long since landed at his final resting place, but his extraordinary winged fleet will always remain in flight, to thrill his viewers for years to come. He always signed his fan letters with the sincere wish, "Happy Landings!—Frederick Blakeslee."

—© 2007 David Saunders

Interviews were conducted with the artist's family and friends. Special thanks to Bill Mann of *Age of Aces* for inspiration, and Liz Romney for editing. Also thanks to Andrea Brock, Sid Bradd, Bill Felsenfeld, and to Paul Schlotthauer at the Pratt Institute Libraries. Archival research was conducted at the New York Public Library, the U. S. Census Bureau, the Social Security Administration, and The New York Times. The pulp magazine checklist was compiled from the author's collection, as well as the collections of John Gunnison, Richard Hall, and the U. S. Library of Congress. Thanks to Major Gordon Bess, Doug Ellis, Ford Jones, Robert Lesser, Jim Steranko, and The Illustration House for images of original paintings in their various collections.

Original cover Illustration for *Dan-Devil* Aces, April, 1944. Collection of Walker Martin

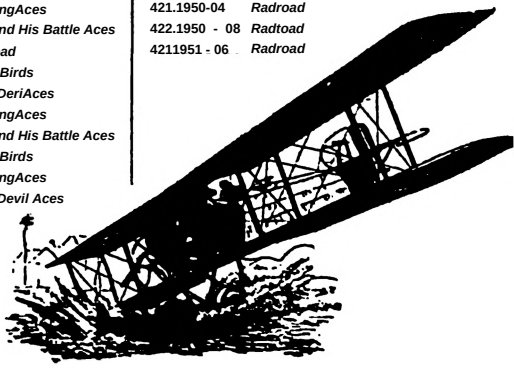
Original cover Illustration for *Dan-Devil Aces,* September, 1942. Collection of Doug Ellis and Deb Fulton

Original cover Illustration for Fighting Aces, July. 1943. Collection of Walker Martin

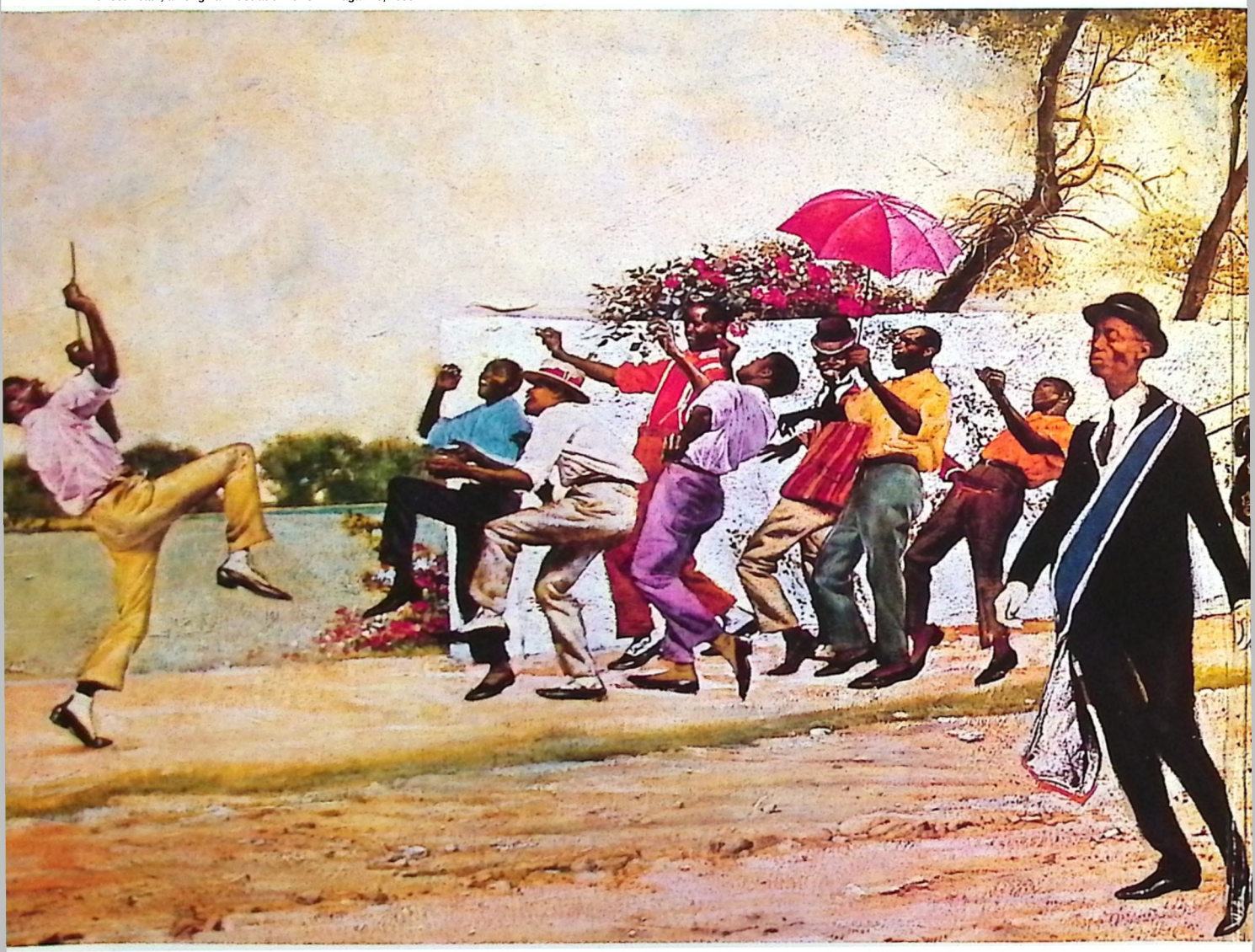
Original cover Illustration for *Battle Binis,* October, 1944

FREDERICK M. BLAKESLEE—PULP MAGAZINE CHECKLIST

1. 1929-07 *War Stories*
2. 1929-09 *War Stories*
3. 1929-11 *Submarine Stories*
4. 1929-12 *Flyers*
5. 1930 - 02 *Flyers*
6. 1930 - 03 *Flyers*
7. 1930 • 05 *War Aces*
8. 1930 - 07 *Flying Aces*
9. 1930 - 08 *Flying Aces*
10. 1930-12 *Battle Aces*
11. 1931-02 *Aces*
12. 1931-02 *War Aces*
11 1931-03 *Battle Aces*
14. 1931-04 *Aces*
15. 1931-04 *BatUe Aces*
16. 1931-05 *Aces*
17. 1931-05 *Battle Aces*
18. 1931 06 *Aces*
19. 1931-06 *Battle Aces*
20. 1931-06 Air Stories
21. 1931-07 *Battle Aces*
22. 1931-08 *BatUe Aces*
23. 1931-09 *BatUe Aces*
24. 1931-10 *BatUe Aces*
25. 1931 - 11 *BatUe Aces*
26. 1931 - 12 *BatUe Aces*
27. 1932 -01 *Battle Aces*
28. 1932-02 *BatUe Aces*
29. 1932 - 03 *Dare-Devil Aces*
30. 1932-03 *BatUe Aces*
31. 1932-04 *Dare-DeriAces*
32. 1932-04 *BatUe Aces*
33. 1932-05 *Battle Aces*
34. 1932 - 06 *Dare-Devil Aces*
35. 1932 - 06 *BatUe Aces*
36. 1932 - 07 *Dare-Devil Aces*
37. 1932-07 *BatUe Aces*
3a 1932 - 08 *Dare-Devil Aces*
39. 1932 - 08 *BatUe Aces*
40. 1932 - 09 *Dare-DeriAces*
41. 1932-09 *Battie Aces*
42. 1932- 10 *Dare-Devil Aces*
43. 1932- 10 *Battie Aces*
44. 1932- 11 *Dare-DeriAces*
45. 1932- 11 *Battle Aces*
46. 1932-12 *Battle Birds*
47. 1932- 12 *Dare-DeriAces*
4a 1933 - 01 *Battle Birds*
49. 1933-01 *Dare-DeriAces*
50. 1933 - 02 *Battle Birds*
51. 1933 - 02 *Dare-DeriAces*
52. 1933 - 03 *Battie Birds*
51 1933 - 03 *Dare-DeriAces*
54. 1933 - 04 *Battle Birds*
55. 1933 - 04 *Dare-DeriAces*
5a 1933 - 05 *BattieBirds*
57. 1933-05 *Dare-Devil Aces*
5a 1933 - 06 *BattieBirds*
59. 1933 - 06 *Dare-DeriAces*
60. 1933 - 07 *Battle Birds*
61. 1933 - 07 *Dare-Devil Aces*
61 1933 - 08 *Battie Birds*
63. 1933-08 *Dare-Devil Aces*
64. 1933 - 09 *Battle Birds*
61 1933-09 *Dare-DeriAces*
66. 1933-10 *BattieBirds*
67. 1933-10 *Dare-DeriAces*
68. 1933-10 08 *And Hts Battie Aces*
69. 1933-11 *BattieBirds*
70. 1933-11 *Dare-DeriAces*
71. 1933-11 *G-8 And His BatUe Aces*
71 1933-12 *BattieBirds*
73. 1933- 12 *Dare-DeriAces*
74. 1933-12 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
75. 1934-01 *BattieBirds*
7a 1934-01 *Dare-DeriAces*
77. 1934 - 01 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
7a 1934 - 02 *BattieBirds*
79. 1934 - 02 *Dare-DeriAces*
80. 1934 - 02 08 *And His Battle Aces*
81. 1934 - 03 *BattieBirds*
82. 1934 - 03 *Dare-DeriAces*
83. 1934 - 03 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
84. 1934 - 04 *BattieBirds*
85. 1934-04 *Dare-DeriAces*
86. 1934 - 04 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
87. 1934 • 05 *BattieBirds*
88. 1934 • 05 *Dare-Deri Aces*
89. 1934 • 05 08 *And Hts Battie Aces*
90. 1934 • 06 *BattieBirds*
91. 1934 • 06 *Dare-DeriAces*
92. 1934 • 06 08 *And His Battle Aces*
93. 1934 • 07 *Dusty Ayres*
94. 1934 • 07 *Dare-Devil Aces*
95. 1934 • 07 08 4 *His BatUe Aces*
96. 1934 • 08 *Dusty Ayres*
97. 1934 • 08 08 4 *His Battle Aces*
98. 1934 • 09 *DustyAyres*
99. 1934 • 09 *Dare-Devil Aces*
100.1934 • 09 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
101.1934 • 10 *Dusty Ayres*
102.1934 • 10 *Dare-DeriAces*
101 1934 • 10 08 *And His Battle Aces*
104.1934 • 11 *DustyAyres*
105.1934 • 11 *Dare-Devil Aces*
106.1934 • 11 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
107.1934 • 12 *DustyAyres*
10a 1934 • 12 *Dare-Devil Aces*
109.1934 • 12 *G-8 And His BatUe Aces*
110.1935 • 01 *DustyAyres*
111. 1935 • 01 *Dare-Devil Aces*
112.1935 • 01 08 *And His Battle Aces*
113.1935 • 02 *DustyAyres*
114.1935 • 02 *Dare-Devil Aces*
115.1935 • 02 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
116.1935 • 03 *DustyAyres*
117.1935 • 03 *Dare-Devil Aces*
118.1935 • 03 *G-8 And His BatUe Aces*
119.1935 • 04 *DustyAyres*
120.1935 • 04 *Dare-Devil Aces*
121.1935 • 04 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
122.1935 • 05 *Dusty Ayres*
123.1935 • 05 *Dare-Devil Aces*
124.1935 • 05 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
125.1935 • 06 *Dare-DeriAces*
126.1935 • 06 *G-8 And His BatUe Aces*
127.1935 • 07 *DustyAyres*
12a 1935 • 07 *Dare-Devil Aces*
129.1935 • 07 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
130.1935 • 08 *Dare-Devil Aces*
131.1935 • 08 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
132.1935 • 09 *Dare-DeriAces*
133.1935 • 09 08*And Hts Battle Aces*
134.1935 • 10 *Dare-Devil Aces*
135.1935 • 10 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
1301935 • 11 *Dare-DeriAces*
137.1935 • 11 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
13a 1935 • 12 *Dare-DeriAces*
139.1935 • 12 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
140.1936 • 01 *Dare-Devil Aces*
141.1936 • 01 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
142.1936 • 02 *Dare-DeriAces*
143.1936 • 02 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
144.1936 • 03 *Dare-DeriAces*
145.1936 • 03 08 *And His Battle Aces*
1401936 • 04 *Dare-Devil Aces*
147.1936 • 04 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
14a 1936 • 05 *Dare-DeriAces*
149.1936 • 05 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
150.1936 • 06 *Dare-Devil Aces*
151.1936 • 06 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
152.1936 • 07 *Dare-DeriAces*
153.1936 • 07 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
154.1936 • 08 *Dare-DeriAces*
155.1936 • 08 08*And His Battle Aces*
15a 1936 • 09 *Dare-DeriAces*
157.1936 • 09 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
15a1936 • 10 *Dare-DeriAces*
159.1936 • 10 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
160.1936 • 11 *Dare-DeriAces*
161.1936 • 11 08 *And His Battie Aces*
162.1936 • 12 *Dare-DeriAces*
1611936 • 12 *^8 And His Battle Aces*
164.1937 • 01 *Dare-DeriAces*
165.1937 • 01 G8 *And His Battie Aces*
16a 1937 • 02 *Dare-DeriAces*
167.1937 • 02 G8 *And His Battie Aces*
16a 1937 • 03 *Dare-DeriAces*
169.1937 • 03 *G8 And His Battle Aces*
170.1937 • 04 *Dare-Devil Aces*
171.1937 • 04 *G 8 And Hts Battie Aces*
172.1937 • 05 *Dare-DeriAces*
1711937-05 08 AM/fis Baffle Aces
174.1937 - 06 Dare-Den/Aces
175.1937 - 06 08 AM His Baffle Aces
176.1937-07 Dare^en/Aces
177.1937 - 07 O8AM/fisBattteAces
178.1937-08 Dare-DevflAces
179.1937-08 08 AM His Baffle Aces
180.1937 - 09 Daze-Den/Aces
181.1937 - 09 08 AM His Baffle Aces
182.1937-10 Dare-Devi/Aces
183.1937-10 *G^And His Battle Aces*
184.1937 -11 *Dare-Devil Aces*
185.1937-11 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
186.1937 -12 *Dare-Devil Aces*
187.1937- 12 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
188.1938 - 01 *Dare-Devil Aces*
189.1938 - 01 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
190.1938 - 02 *Dare-Devi Aces*
191.1938 - 02 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
192.1938 - 03 *Dare-Devi Aces*
193.1938 - 03 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
194.1938 04 *Dare-Devil Aces*
195.1938 - 04 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
196.1938 - 05 *Dare-DeriAces*
197.1938-05 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
198.1938 - 06 *Dare-DeriAces*
199.1938 - 06 08 *And His Battle Aces*
200.1938 - 07 *Dare-Devil Aces*
201.1938-07 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
202.1938 - 08 *Dare-Devi Aces*
203.1938 - 08 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
204.1938 - 09 *Dare-Devi Aces*
205.1938 - 09 *G4 And His Battie Aces*
206.1938-10 *Dare-Devi Aces*
207.1938-10 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
208.1938-11 *Daredevil Aces*
209.1938-11 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
210.1938 -12 *Dare-DeriAces*
211.1938 -12 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
212.1939 - 01 *Dare-DeriAces*
213.1939 - 01 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
214.1939-02 *Dare-Devil Aces*
215.1939 - 02 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
216.1939 - 03 *Dare-Devi Aces*
217.1939 - 03 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
218.1939 - 04 *Dare-DeriAces*
219.1939 - 04 *^8 And His Battle Aces*
220.1939 - 05 *Dare-Devi Aces*
221.1939 - 05 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
222.1939 - 06 *Dare-Devi Aces*
223.1939 - 06 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
224.1939 - 07 *Dare-DeriAces*
225.1939-07 *G8 And His Battle Aces*
226.1939 - 08 *Dare-DeriAces*
227.1939 - 08 *G3 And His Battle Aces*
228.1939 - 09 *Dare-Devi Aces*
229.1939-09 *G-8 And His Battle Acts*
230.1939-10 *Dare-Devi Aces*
231.1939-10 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
232.1939-11 *Dare-DeriAces*
2311939-11 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
234.1939- 12 *Dare-Devi Aces*
235.1939-12 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
236.1940 - 01 *Dare-DeriAces*
237.1940 - 01 *G8 And His Battie Aces*
23a 1940 - 02 *Battle Birds*
239.1940-02 *Dare-Devi Aces*
240.1940-02 *G8 And His Battle Aces*
241.1940 - 03 *Battle Buds*
242.1940 - 03 *Dare-Devi Aces*
2411940 - 03 *FightingAces*
244.1940 - 03 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
245.1940 - 04 *Captain Combat*
246.1940 - 04 *Dare-Deri Aces*
247.1940 - 04 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
248.1940 - 05 *Battle Buds*
249.1940-05 *Dare-DeriAces*
25a 1940-05 *Fighting Acts*
251.1940 - 05 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
252.1940 - 06 *Captain Combat*
2511940-06 *Dare-DeriAces*
254.1940 - 06 *G-8 And Hrs Battle Aces*
255.1940 - 07 *Battle Buds*
256.1940 -07 *Dare-DeriAces*
257.1940 - 07 *FightingAces*
258.1940 - 07 *G-8 And Hrs Battie Aces*
259.1940 - 08 *Captain Combat*
260.1940 - 08 *Dare-DeriAces*
261.1940 - 08 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
262.1940 - 09 *Battie Birds*
2611940 - 09 *Dare-Devi Aces*
264.1940 - 09 *Fighting Aces*
265.1940 - 09 *G4 And His Battle Aces*
266.1940-10 *Dare-DeriAces*
267.1940- 10 *G-8 And Hrs Battle Aces*
268.1940-11 *Battle Birds*
269.1940-11 *Dare-Devi Aces*
270.1940-11 *FightingAces*
271.1940-11 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
272.1940-12 *Dare-DeriAces*
2711940 -12 *G-8 And Hs Battle Aces*
274.1941 -01 *Battie Birds*
275. 1941-01 *Dare-Devi Aces*
276.1941-01 *fighting Aces*
277.1941-01 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
278.1941-02 *Dare-Devi Aces*
279.1941-02 08 *And His Battle Aces*
28a 1941-03 *Battle Birds*
281.1941-03 *Dare-DeriAces*
282.1941-03 *fighting Aces*
283.1941-03 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
284.1941-04 *Dare-DeriAces*
285.1941-04 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
28a 1941-05 *Battie Birds*
287.1941-05 *Dare-Devil Aces*
2811941-05 *fighting Aces*
289.1941-05 *Battle Birds*
290.1941-06 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
291.1941-07 *Adventure*
292.1941-07 *Dare-Deri Aces*
2911941-07 *FightingAces*
294.1941-08 *BattieBirds*
295.1941-08 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
296.1941-09 *Dare-DeriAces*
297.1941-09 *FightingAces*
2911941 -10 *BattieBirds*
299.1941-10 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
300.1941 -11 *Dare-DeriAces*
301.1941 -11 *FightingAces*
302.1941 -12 *BattieBirds*
303. 1941 -12 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
304.1942 - 01 *Dare-DeriAces*
3011942 - 01 *FightingAces*
3011942-02 *BattieBirds*
307.1942 - 02 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
3011942 - 03 *Dare-Devil Aces*
309.1942 - 03 *FightingAces*
310.1942-04 *BattieBirds*
311.1942-04 *G8 And His Battle Aces*
312.1942-05 *Dare-DeriAces*
313.1942 - 05 *FightingAces*
314.1942-05 Sky Fighters
3111942-06 *BattieBirds*
3111942-06 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
317.1942 - 07 *Dare-DeriAces*
3111942 - 07 *FightingAces*
319.1942-08 *BattieBirds*
320.1942 - 08 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
321.1942 - 09 *Dare-Devil Aces*
322.1942 - 09 *FightingAces*
3211942-10 *BattieBirds*
324.1942-10 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
3211942-11 *Dare-Deri Aces*
321 1942- 11 *FightingAces*
327.1942- 12 *BattieBirds*
3211942-12 *G-8 And His Battie Aces*
329.1943 - 01 *Dare-DeriAces*
330.1943-01 *FightingAces*
331.1943-01 *Railroad*
332.1943-02 *G-8 And Hrs Battle Aces*
3311943-03 *BattieBirds*
334.1943 - 03 *Dare-DeriAces*
335.1943-03 *FightingAces*
3311943-04 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
337.1943 - 04 *Railroad*
3311943 - 05 *BattieBirds*
339.1943-05 *Dare-DeriAces*
3411943 - 05 *FightingAces*
341.1943-06 *G 8 And His Battle Aces*
342.1943 - 07 *BattieBirds*
343.1943-07 *FightingAces*
344.1943-08 *Dare-Devil Aces*
345.1943-08 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
34a 1943 - 08 *Rairoad*
347.1943 - 09 *BattieBirds*
34a 1943-09 *FightingAces*
349.1943-10 *Dare-Devi Aces*
350.1943 -10 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
351.1943-10 *Railroad*
352.1943-11 *Battie Birds*
3511943-11 *FightingAces*
354.1943-11 *Railroad*
355.1943-12 *Dare-Devi Aces*
35a 1943-12 *G-8 And His Battle Aces*
357.1943-12 *Rairoad*
3511944-01 *Battle Birds*
359.1944 - 01 *FightingAces*
360.1944 - 01 *Railroad*
361.1944 - 02 *Dare-DeriAces*
362.1944 - 02 *G8 And His Battle Aces*
3611944-03 *BattieBirds*
364.1944 - 03 *FightingAces*
365.1944 - 04 *Dare-Deri Aces*
36a 1944 - 04 *&8 And His Battle Aces*
367.1944 - 04 *Rairoad*
3611944 - 05 *BattieBirds*
369.1944-05 *FightingAces*
370.1944 - 05 *Railroad*
371.1944 - 06 *Dare-Deri Aces*
372.1944-06 *G-8 And Hs Battie Aces*
3711944 - 07 *FightingAces*
374.1944 - 09 *Railroad*
375.1944-10 *Railroad*
3711944-11 *Railroad*
377.1944-12 *Railroad*
3711945 - 02 *Railroad*
379.1945 - 04 *Rairoad*
380.1945 - 05 *Adventure*
38L 1945-08 *Railroad*
382.1945 - 09 *Railroad*
3811945-12 *Radroad*
384.1946 - 01 *Dare-DeriAces*
385.1946-01 *Radroad*
3811946-02 *Dare-DeriAces*
387.1946 - 02 *Railroad*
3811946-03 *Dare-DeriAces*
389.1946-05 *Dare-DeriAces*
390.1946 - 05 *Railroad*
391.1946-06 *Radroad*
392.1946 - 07 *Dare-DeriAces*
3911946 - 08 *Railroad*
394.1946 - 09 *Dare-DeriAces*
395.1946-09 *Radroad*
3911946-10 *Radroad*
397.1946 • 11 *Dare-DeriAces*
3911946 -12 *Railroad*
399.1947 - 01 *Railroad*
400.1947-03 *Railroad*
401.1947 - 05 *Railroad*
402.1947 - 08 *Radroad*
4011947 -10 *Railroad*
404.1947 -11 *Railroad*
405.1948 - 02 *Railroad*
4011948-03 *Railroad*
407.1948 - 05 *Railroad*
4011948-07 *Railroad*
409.1948 - 08 *Radroad*
410.1948-10 *Railroad*
411.1948-11 *Railroad*
412.1948 • 12 *Radroad*
4111949 - 01 *Radroad*
414.1949 - 02 *Radroad*
415.1949-03 *Railroad*
4111949 - 04 *Radroad*
417.1949 - 05 *Radroad*
4111949 - 09 *Railroad*
419.1949-10 *Radroad*
4211949-11 *Railroad*
421.1950-04 *Radroad*
422.1950 - 08 *Radtoad*
4211951 - 06 *Radroad*



4 *Perfect Death,* an original Illustration for *UFE* magazine, 1956



MORTON ROBERTS :

BY ABE ECHEVARRIA
AND BARRY KLUG ERMAN

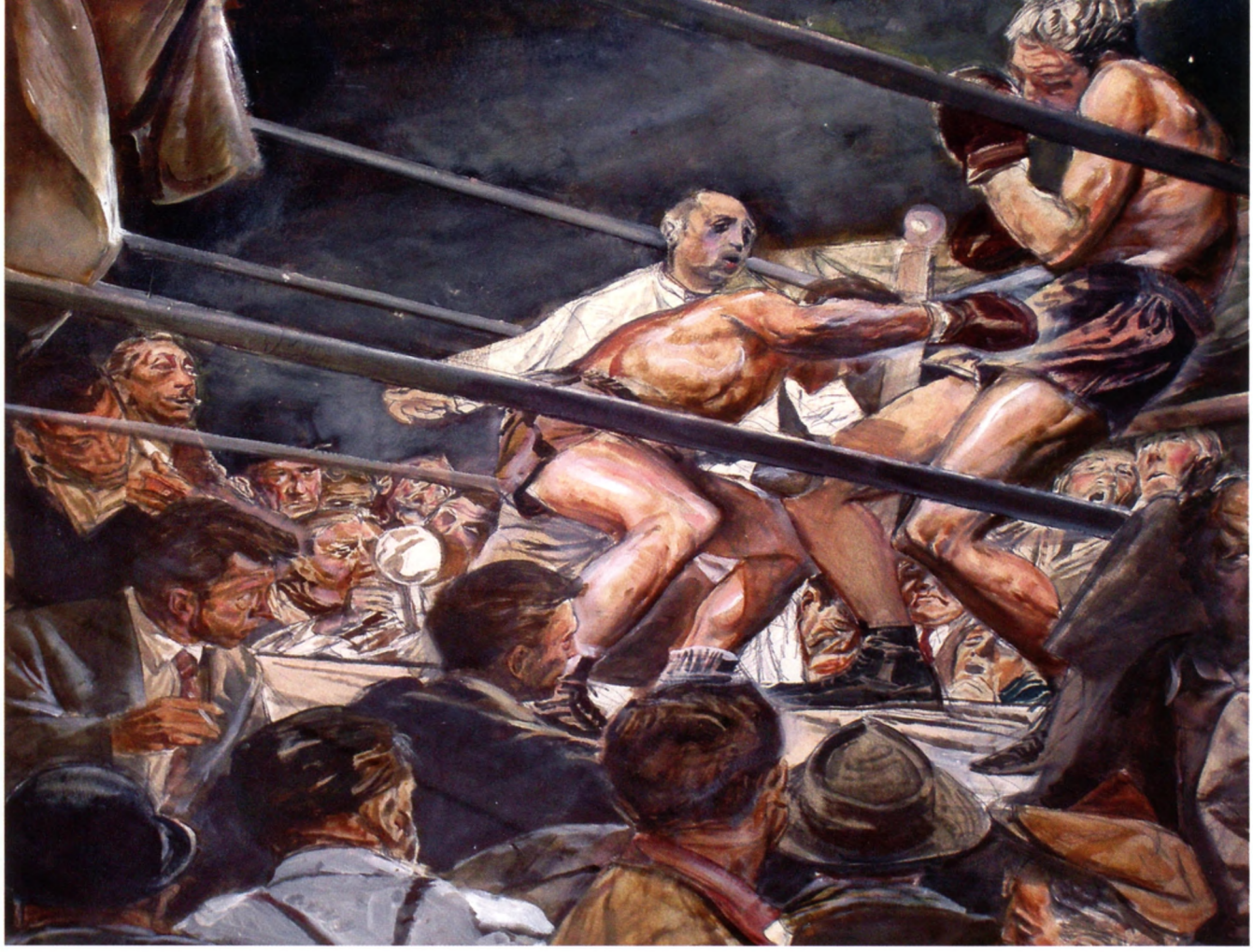
Preliminary sketch for A *Meet Death, en* Illustration for *UFE* magazine, 1956

AN ILLUSION OF LIFE

If you had the good fortune to visit New Orleans during the 1950s, you might have come upon a great funeral procession winding its way down the streets of the French Quarter. The leisurely stride of the marching jazz band, the manic posturing of festive black youths following alongside, and the infectious spirits of the mourners rhythmically swaying to the beat of the music might have struck you at first as incongruous, given the gravity of the occasion. To the participants, however, such an occasion was not always a cause for dour spirits. Often, families belonging to one of the local lodges preferred to see their loved ones go out in style—with dancing, music, and the familiar strains of such songs as "Sing On," "Hie Saints," or "Didn't He Ramble," rather than with the more somber fare one might expect. The festivities would usually continue until the procession reached the lodge hall before breaking up, for to the cognoscenti this was always the end of a perfect death.

In 1956 a young man stood alongside the cobbled streets of Saint Peter and Rue Royale and sketched the Young Tuxedo Brass Band as they wound their way towards Jackson Square in just such a procession. He had to sketch rapidly, for the figures hardly stopped long enough for the artist to record any more than the most fleeting of gestures. Yet the painting he produced of the event for *Life* magazine captured to perfection both the pageantry and the passion that throbbed around him as he stood amidst the onlookers on that hot summer afternoon. It is a painting of immense visual appeal, and in its own way reflects the very essence of Morton Roberts' life and work.

Original illustration for *LIFE* magazine, 1956



Preliminary sketch for Sports *Illustrated* illustration, 1958

I first met the painter Morton Roberts when I was a fledgling art student. My brother, who was also an art student at the time, had encouraged me to enroll in an evening painting class being taught by the then exceedingly youthful teacher at the National Academy of Design. I remember clearly one memorable occasion shortly after I had enrolled at the Academy, when I journeyed home after attending Mortons' class. My face exposed to the cold winds that whistled across Fifth Avenue, I left the protection of the tall Upper East Side apartment buildings and briskly navigated my way through the high numbered streets and posh avenues with their imposingly elegant pre-war buildings. Doormen posed at their stations behind glass doors, vigilant soldiers of the night in their spotless, almost military uniforms. I darted down the stairs at the 86th and Lexington Avenue subway station, leaned my body against the sturdy wooden turnstile, and pushed my way through. Boarding the train I began my long journey through the underground grottoes of Manhattan to Brooklyn. The car harbored only a few late-night stragglers on this cold evening, and like myself they huddled in isolation on the corn-colored, beaded seats. It was winter, and the year was 1961.

I settled in my seat and closed my eyes to shut out the flickering glare of the lights as the stations whizzed by, while my crossed arms rested in a proprietary manner atop the painting held in my lap. The painting was a portrait of the model who had posed for our art class that evening, the dark features of her face adeptly visualized in a class demonstration by our instructor Morton Roberts. I found myself the keeper of a treasure that evening, a treasure which my generous teacher in a benevolent moment had bestowed upon me. I was not about to let it get away!

Morton Roberts at the easel, 1958

My brother Bill had shown me tearsheets of Morton's paintings for *Life* magazine. Bill, who had been painting and studying fine art, was enrolled in Morton's evening painting class at the National Academy of Design at 90th Street and Fifth Avenue. I am thankful for my brother's encouragement to enroll with him, as it proved to be the turning point of my life, and revitalized my own quest to become an illustrator.

Storyville Nude, **an Illustration from the Jan Series In *UFE* magazine, 1958**

Portrait drawing. 1963

One evening each week, during the winter of ’61, we made the arduous subway journey to the Academy. Morton was a robust man who wore a smock during class, and roamed the room with an air of confidence. At first he paid little attention to my labors at painting the model. I had yet to meet his expectations. My painting of the figure was flat, but I worked hard and continued to make progress. It was necessary to envision the underlying bone and muscle structure that gave the model form. I needed to master this skill which would breathe life into the figure 1 labored so hard to duplicate. Morton would circle around the class to my easel, grin, and move on, leaving me to further search the mystery of the human form. It seemed as if my eyes were open but I was blind.

To see is to represent on the canvas a study of the subject in dimension. My problem was to create a sense of relief on a two-dimensional surface. After weeks of grins, groans, and mere glances, he stopped in front of my canvas. Suddenly I had his attention. I recall the pose he struck, arms folded over the girth of his chest, right foot pointing forward and head held high; he exuded great class and stature. He smiled at me. "You’ve got it!” he proclaimed, “The form!” He pointed to the elbow of the model on my canvas. What he had drawn attention to, and what I had finally captured on my canvas, was an illusion of life. The arm existed in space. The study of light, color, and draftmanship created a sense of relief. You could reach around the arm as if it were a hologram. He seemed inspired by my accomplishment and gathered other students before my easel, offering a demonstration of his own.

Woman with Flowers, an Illustration from the Jazz Series In *LIFE* magazine, 1958

The Kids from Brooklyn, 1960

"The Grand Marshall", an illustration from the Jazz Series in *LIFE* magazine, 1958

Borrowing a spare masonite panel from my brother, primed and covered with a sepia tone, Morton began a portrait of the model. He drew her dark features with the brush using raw umber. Then he loaded another brush with titanium white. Using the white to establish the light areas, he created subtle pearly tones by fusing the white and umber. His left hand held a mahl stick to support the palm of his brush-wielding hand. He applied a Venetian red glaze over the white and umber passages and reworked them again, heightening them with white. I stood transfixed in awe of this masterful orchestration of glaze application in red over umber and white. His eyes concentrated on the models facial features and magically transposed them onto the panel. The face came to life within moments, on a surface that was formerly only sepia ground. Gazing at the finished study in awe we all thought that here was an artist living out of his time. Here was a true genius; a painter who could have achieved lasting fame had he lived during the High Renaissance. "This portrait is for Abe," Morton told the students, waving aside the requests of others who had asked if they might keep the remarkable study. The following week, Morton invited Bill and myself to stay after class. "Would you like to apprentice with me?" he inquired. "Sure," we replied immediately. There was no need to think about it, only to get started.

The weekend trips to Harrison were adventures of their own. At that time the Hutchison River Parkway was a winding, treacherous, narrow stretch of highway in need of repair. We drove up in a '54, white, two-door Buick Special. Its distinguishing features were four holes on each side of the hood, a hulking V8 engine, and a massive 12-volt battery in constant need of recharging. We referred to it appropriately, and perhaps lovingly, as "The Tank." The cars of this era were emblazoned with great metal emblems which the neighborhood kids ultimately pried off with bottle-cap openers. The stylish trend was to wear them as belt buckles or pendants.

My brother Bill and I, who grew up in Spanish Harlem, the Lower East Side, and Brooklyn, regarded a drive into the sunshine of Westchester as a big deal. Morton's home was on Highfield Road. On the way we passed the homes of some of the most prominent figures of that time: Fugazy, the tourism magnate; the comic Jonathan Winters; the talk show host Jack Paar; and Johnny Carson, then the host of *Who Do You Trust?* on ABC. These were just some of Morton's illustrious neighbors.

Arriving at Morton's studio, we made our way through the double oak doors. These were necessary to keep out the cold, for in the dead of winter the studio could be chilly. On late evenings when Morton's wife, Jean, and his three boys, Michael, Keith, and Alan were upstairs asleep, we'd ease the doors shut behind us. Morton would then station himself in front of the easel that cradled a work in progress. "Can I offer you guys some Gran Marnier and a cigar?" he would ask.

***Portrait of Jean,* watercolor, 1954**

Accepting, we settled into chairs amidst taborets, easels, rolls of canvas, and an assortment of paintings stacked imposingly against the stuccoed walls. The air was heavily ladened with the aroma of oils, and the familiar (to us) smell of turpentine and linseed oil. Lighting Havanas and holding a warming liquer in the grasp of our palm, we began the nightly task that lay before us. These nights and days held great heart and spirit, and all the expression and consequence of life. Ideas were disclosed unabashedly and conclusions were drawn. With the bravado of youth we were fervently high on the ideal that anything could be accomplished. The belief that something of acute significance could happen at any moment added vitality to our lives and transformed the everyday tedium of mere existence into something magical, transcendent.

Feeling the sable hairs, Morton would choose his brush. Resting his arm on the mahl stick, he made a flurry of passages. Redrawing and applying layers of glaze, he finished whole sections of the composition before moving to work on other sections with an ease and gusto that was something to behold, especially for my brother and myself, who had never been in the company of such an accomplished virtuoso.

These visitations within the private domain of an artist possessed of such genius generated a sense of privilege for me. Genius was manifest in the process of Morton Roberts' work like the flare of a conductor's baton. His brush would articulate an exact statement, fusing swatches of pigment with complete precision. The total effect seemed like the harmony

Demonstration portrait by Roberts, given to Abe Echevarria

Watercolor, 1953

demonstrated by seasoned musicians. He spoke to us as he worked. Conversation would fire Morton and compel his will to accelerate the painted composition to an orchestrated pitch announcing its conclusion. This was Morton at work. These night sessions gave way to the dawning of day, and we would part as light filled the studio.

It was Morton's plan at the time to establish a picture factor}; a method of working created by the 17th-century artist Peter Paul Rubens. Morton adopted this idea in order to accelerate the amount of commissions he could accept. My brother and I would prepare the panels and work through the underpainting stages, following Morton's initial sketches as a guide. Morton onh needed to make minor corrections, adding the color over glazes and signing the completed painting. The client, unaware of the process, delighted in the stunning results.

The trust Morton instilled in our efforts fortified my confidence. 1 knew that my contribution was of importance to the final work. This system of working allowed Morton to concentrate on the pencil compositions for the MacArthur murals, a prestigious commission that would take several years to complete, dedicated to General Douglas MacArthur, the noted commander in W Wil and Korea. Six murals would decorate the rotunda at Norfolk, Virginia. The site would serve as the final resting place for this most distinguished general.

It was the artist Alton Tobey who, after Morton's death, would complete the murals at the MacArthur Memorial. Tobey, an academician and colleague, faithfully adhered to the initial vision of Morton's original designs. The murals today embody the promise drawn in ebony so many years ago.

A commission of this size called for great experimentation. Morton would see to it that we found a proven method of application. Fresco, a technique of applying color to wet plaster, was discussed and rejected. Morton felt more at ease adhering canvas to the wall as a working surface. My brother and I cracked eggs, rolling the egg yolks in our palms to remove the excess white. The yolks served as binding in our tempera formulas. We mixed an array of colors using powdered pigments. Our surroundings seemed more like a chemistry lab than a picture factory. We used our concoctions to paint scenes copied from old master prints. These studies served as tests for longevity and color trueness. This acquired expertise would lead to the strategy necessary to complete the murals.

I had an occasional glimpse of Morton creating the sketches from a wealth of reference materials strewn around the stu-

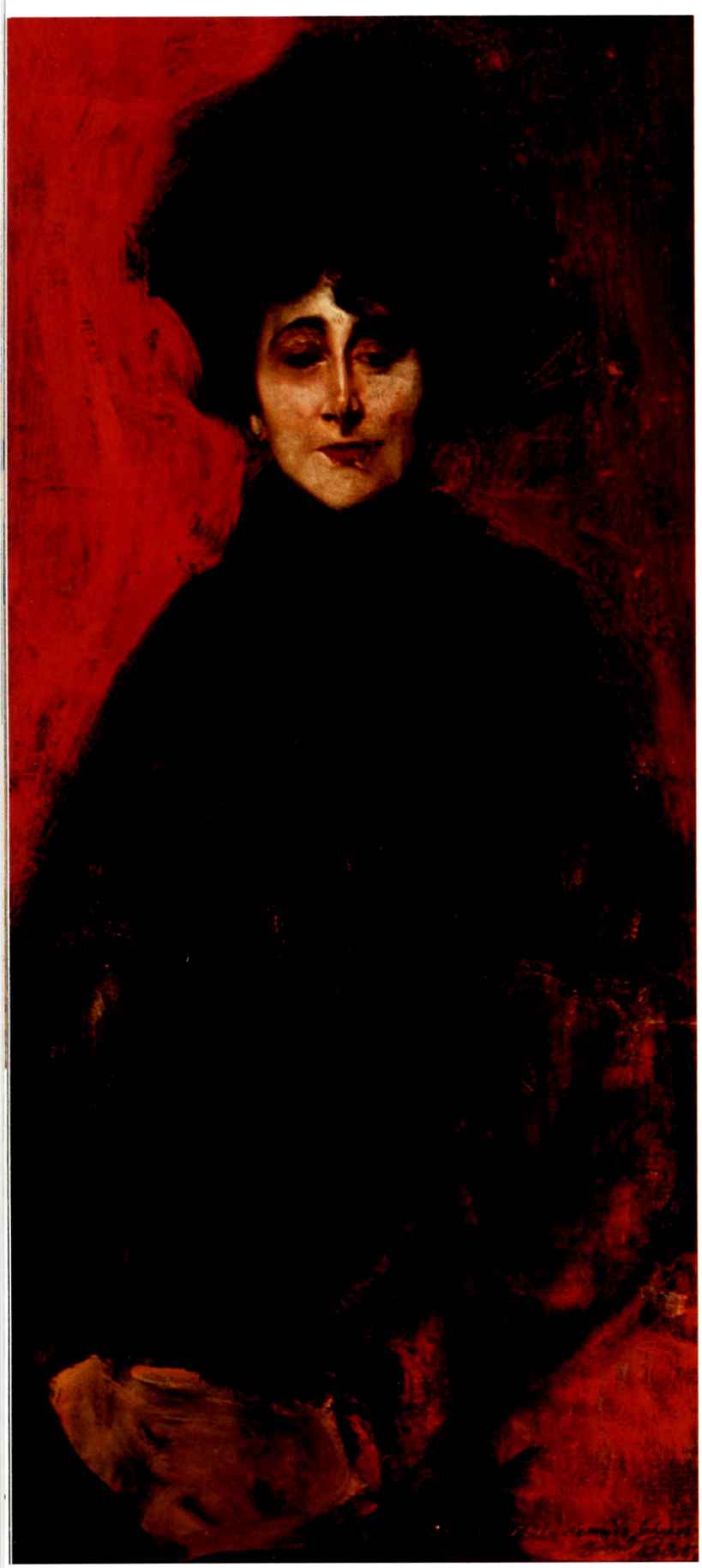
Watercolor, 1953

dio. I regret that I am now unable to locate these ebony pencil drawings that Morton masterfully assembled for this homage to MacArthur. The draftsmanship imbued in each of the six compositions, depicting a stage in the general's career, was reminiscent of the quintessential drawings of the 19th-century artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Mortons' study of past artists such as Paolo Veronese, Diego Velasquez, Peter Paul Rubens, Rembrandt Van Rijn, Caravaggio, John Singer Sargent, George Bellows, Jack Levine, and others, culminated into a refined vision of virtuosity. A veritable illusion of life would surround the rotunda at the MacArthur Memorial.

Morton, elated over our progress, showed his exuberance at Risolis. Risolis Tavern & Restaurant off Main Street in Harrison became a routine stop after evening classes at the Academy. The proprietor, Joe Risoli, would greet Morton and lead us to the dining area. The minestrone soup was the fare recommended by Morton. We indulged in rich helpings served to us at his expense. Conversation included heated issues covered by the media that day. Desegregation was one topic that was on everyone's mind, I remember at that moment in time, and would remain a continuing political goal of the '60s. Concluding the meals, Morton would light a cigar and beam as he welcomed our return to his studio. Each evening edged us closer to the day we would begin work on the murals, the grand illusion.

One evening as we were working in his studio, a call rang out from

***Portrait of Armand Shaper*, ballpoint pen, 1960**



An unpublished sketch from the Jazz Series in *LIFE* magazine. 1958

the kitchen area breaking the stillness in the air... "Morty!" Morton set down his brush and mahl stick, looked over at us, and exclaimed, "It's Jonathan!" The comic Jonathan Winters was one of Morton's closest and dearest friends, and his unannounced visits were a routine Morton enthusiastically embraced. We made our way out of the studio through the living room and into the kitchen. At the time Jonathan was enjoying a boost in his career, appearing regularly on Jack Parr's *Tonight Show.*

At first glance Jonathan seemed surprised by the presence of my brother and myself. Morton hadn't mentioned our apprenticeship. After introductions we sat around the oak country kitchen table. I felt Jonathan's uneasiness about our being there, but he soon relaxed upon hearing that Bill had served as a Marine. Jonathan immediately launched into comical tales of his own Marine experience. We roared with laughter in response to his spontaneous monologue.

This was a conciliatory moment for Morton. A remedy for long hours of labor spent at the easel, this moment of lightness was delivered through the back door of his own home by one of the leading humorists of the day. The brilliance of Jonathan's humor was matched by the brilliance of Morton's art, and there I sat privy to this bond of friendship. I remember feeling that there was a sense of Laurel and Hardy about them as they shared in the repartee.

On one balmy Sunday afternoon, I came upon the two of them on a stretch of road leading towards Morton's house. They were walking on the side of the road laughing with abandon as I approached. I pulled my car over and greeted them. It happened that they had been joy-riding in Jonathan's newly delivered Facel Vega, a very expensive, fast, and sophisticated sedan produced in France. Their maiden excursion ended abruptly at the bottom of the hill when this elite automobile suddenly quit running. Using the incident as an excuse to exercise, they proceeded down the road. I watched the two animated figures fade through the heat of that afternoon, distancing themselves like an ending to a Max Sennet movie. It seemed to me that maintaining a good sense of humor was a required prescription in 1963, and Morton would always take time out to joke around and laugh. Despite the monumentality and drama in his approach to illustration, he never took himself too seriously.

Meanwhile, the trend in illustration was moving away from a highly representational approach toward a more stylized and simplistic rendering of figurative composition. This change in approach came at a time when Morton had no equals, only admirers, among colleagues and friends. He was at this time at the very pinnacle of the profession and approaching the top of his form as an artist. Still, he feared the high-circulation publications would embrace this new wave in illustration and diminish his commissions. This was an ominous thought that seemed inappropriate since his powerful, inspirational work on the MacArthur murals would surely have secured the serious recognition and acclaim he yearned to achieve.

We worked hard and fast to meet assignment deadlines,

ALEX RAYMOND
–His Life and Art

"This beautiful edition of Alex Raymond: His Life and Art is an amazing collection by Tom Roberts. After over a decide of research Tom has brought to life the extensiveness of Raymond's career, including rarely seen and unpublished works. A must-have for any collector."

Greg Hildebrandt
Gold Medal Award-winning illustrator, Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, Marvel

"Early on in my career, I was much more aware of the work of Alex Raymond than that of Hal Foster. Tom Roberts' celebration of Alex Raymond is a book you can't wait to get your hands on."

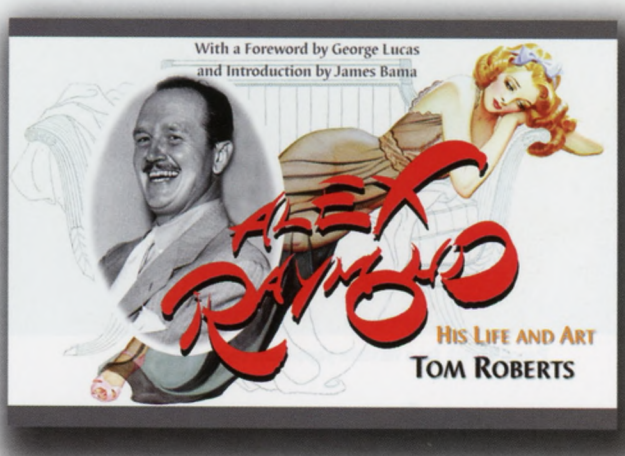
Gary Gianni
Eisner Award-winning artist, Prince Valiant, Savage Tales of Solomon Kane

"Sophistication, elegance, imagination. A rare cocktail, but one Alex Raymond mixed throughout his life. With the publication of this book, the world will be able to stand at the bar Raymond set so high and throwback his genius as long and as hard as they like. I've been driving under the influence of Raymond for some 40 odd years. Now the full breadth of his talent will be available in a book covering his entire amazing career."

Geofrey Darrow
Eisner Award-winning artist/creator, Hard Boiled, Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot; Conceptual Designer, "The Matrix" triology

FEATURING
175 Photos and nearly 400 illustrations!
Many previously unpublished!

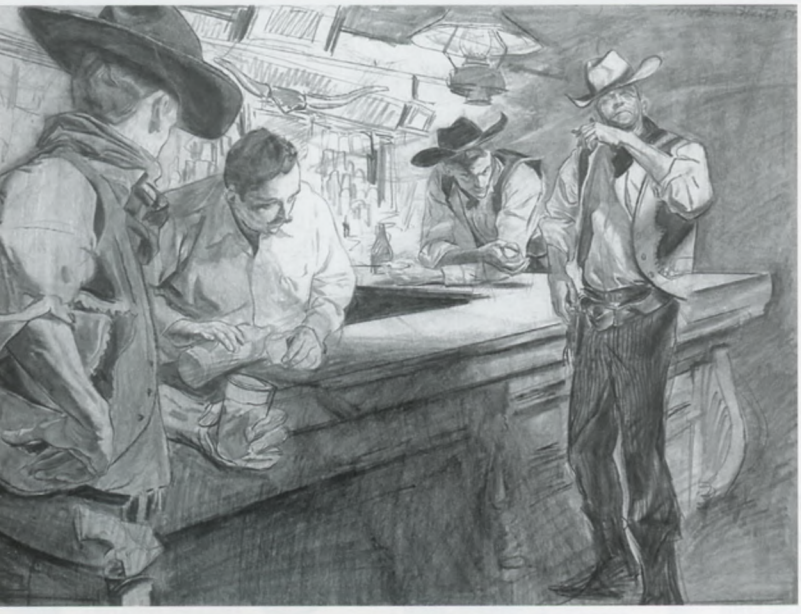
$49.95 320 pages
12x9 Hardbound Edition
ISBN-13: 978-1-886937-78-9
ISBN: 1-886937-78-8



ADVENTURE HOUSE

Adventure House
914 Laredo Road
Silver Spring, MD 20901
www.adventurehouse.com
sales@adventurehouse.com
Distributed by Diamond Comics Distributors
and Diamond Book Distributors

"Christmas Carolers," original illustration for *Collier's* magazine, 1960



Pencil sketch for a Western paperback cover, 1956

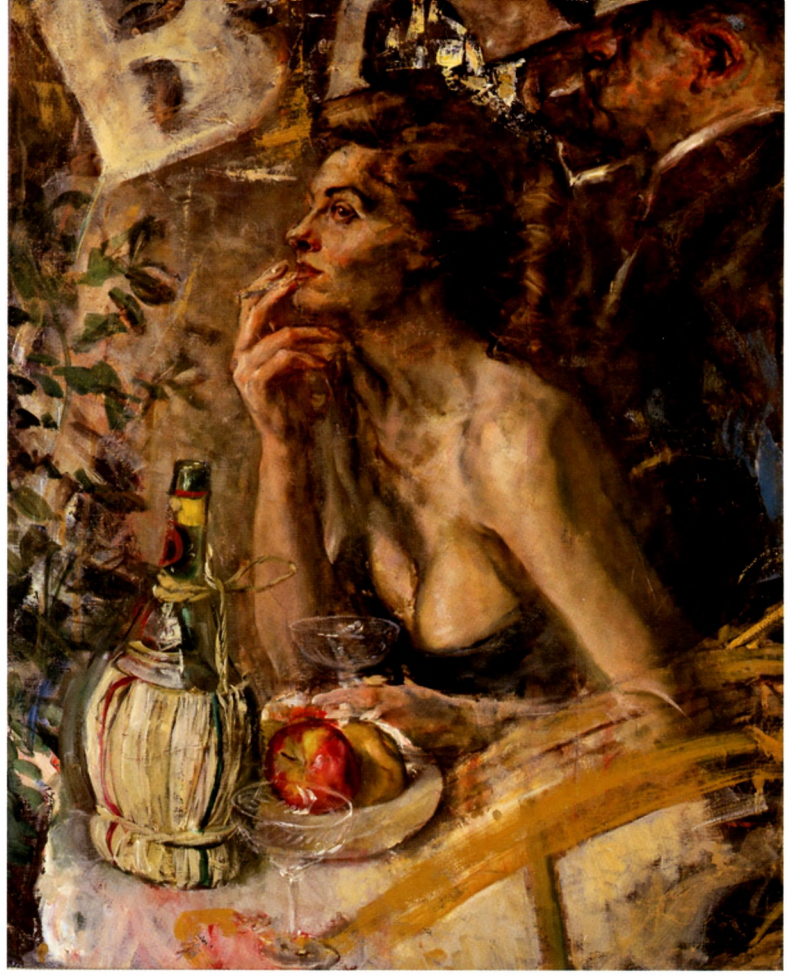
for his art remained in strong demand. And yet, I soon felt the depth of Morton's concern for the future. As I packed brushes and paints at the end of a Thursday evening class, the artist asked if I would accompany him back to his studio. I sensed by his demeanor that he needed to talk, so we shared a Taxi down Fifth Avenue to Grand Central Station.

Once inside the taxi he handed me the latest issue of *Life* magazine. On the cover was an illustration depicting the invasion of the Bay of Pigs. The work was by the artist Sanford Kossin, whose edgy and kinetic style exemplified the new trend in illustration. It no longer reflected the bold, painterly, bravura brushwork Morton favored in his illustrations, with its echoes of the giants of a bygone-age of easel painting, but stressed a more linear, experimental, and graphic approach.

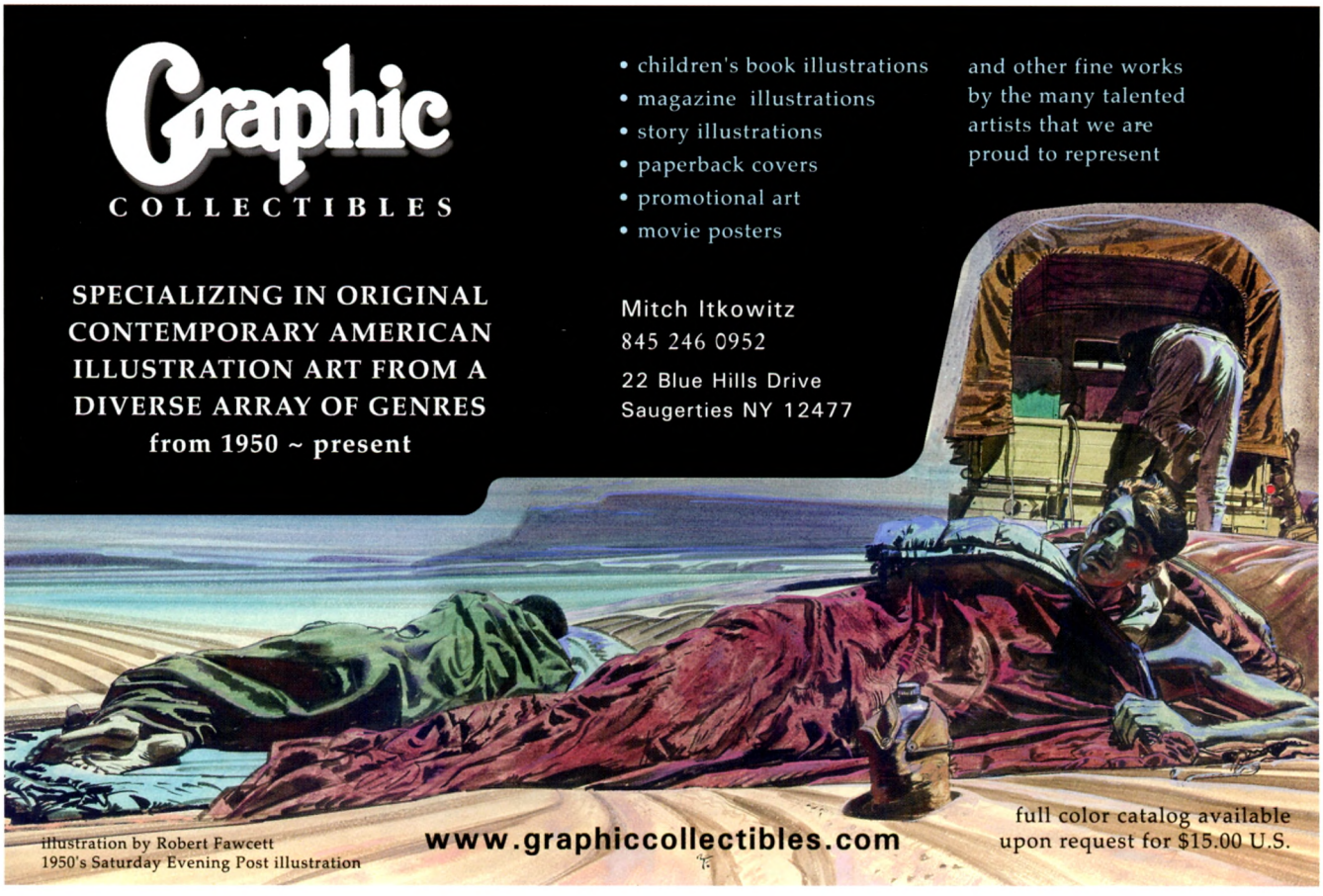
"What do you think?" Morton asked. Although I felt Kossin's work was unusually good, and gave the reader the feeling that the illustrations might have been drawn from life, I still would have loved to have seen what Morton could have done with the subject matter. He had shown such great virtuosity

in his paintings for *Rigoletto*, *The Story of Jazz*, segregation, and the Russian Revolution that had appeared in the magazine in previous years. The paintings documenting the Bay of Pigs invasion might have established a new benchmark for Morton, and given him a chance to put down in paint some of the passionate feelings he harbored regarding America's place in the world.

We arrived at Grand Central, stepped out of the taxi, and made our way down the stairs inside the Vanderbilt Avenue entrance. Above us, the Kodak display illuminated the Grand Concourse of the station. A large montage of photos of the late John F. Kennedy expressed an America in mourning. The image held Morton's attention. Staring up at this dedication, he made reference to America's loss and the prospect of future discord. It seemed prophetic, for the '60s would indeed prove to be a decade of ferment and division. It saddened me to leave Morton that evening. As he turned, making his way to the gate, I fixed my gaze on his short yet robust figure framed briefly in silhouette in the entranceway. The waiting train hissed impatiently as Morton vanished from sight. It was the last time I would see him.



An unidentified oil painting, 1950s


Graphic
COLLECTIBLES
• children's book illustrations
• magazine illustrations
• story illustrations
• paperback covers
• promotional art
• movie posters
and other fine works by the many talented artists that we are proud to represent
SPECIALIZING IN ORIGINAL CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION ART FROM A DIVERSE ARRAY OF GENRES
from 1950 ~ present
Mitch Itkowitz
845 246 0952
22 Blue Hills Drive
Saugerties NY 12477
illustration by Robert Fawcett
1950's Saturday Evening Post illustration
www.graphiccollectibles.com
full color catalog available upon request for $15.00 U.S.

"Lenin Addressing Troops," original illustration for *LIFE* magazine, 1959. Photo courtesy of The Illustration House. Inc.

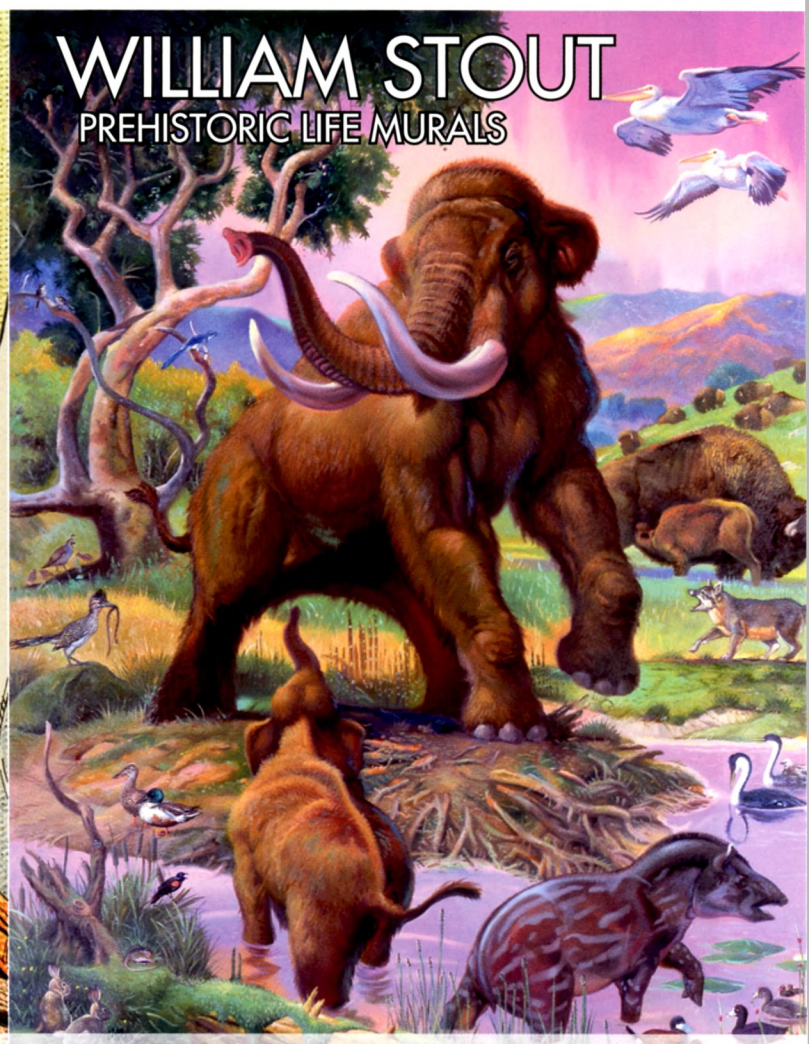
Morton Robert Schwartz (he later dropped his last name to avoid confusion with another contemporary artist) was born in Worchester, Massachusetts in 1927. A child prodigy, his family attempted, despite their modest income, to provide him with both art lessons and all of the costly materials he needed for the paintings and drawings of New England life that he was completing in abundance.

In the late 1930s the family left Worchester and moved to the neighboring town of Lynn, where Morton attended high school. Friends and acquaintances remember him as a rather shy but engaging youth, whose every free moment was spent prowling the winding streets of the town or more likely perched, sketchbook in hand, upon one of the rocky promontories that dot the beaches of this seacoast town, drawing incessantly anything that caught his fancy. This might take the form of a windswept cluster of trees, a foaming surf breaking on the shore, the shady eaves of the local church, or on more than one occasion, the pert and delicate features of a pretty classmate, preferably one with aristocratically high cheekbones.

After graduating from high school and a short stint in the

FLESK PUBLICATIONS™

2008 SUMMER/FALL RELEASES • PROMOTING THE ARTS THROUGH QUALITY COLLECTIONS™

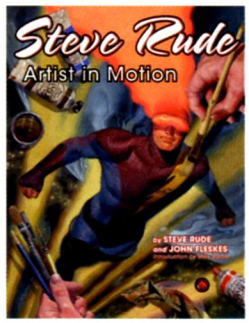


The Prince Valiant Page by Gary Gianni. Foreword by Mike Mignola. Introduction by Robert Wagner. Entertaining and insightful text accompany Gianni's artwork to reveal his creative process from script to finish. $29.95 HB and $39.95 HB signed limited in slipcase editions coming. 112 pages, 9"x 12". Available June 15, 2008.

William Stout: Prehistoric Life Murals by William Stout. Introduction by Ray Harryhausen. An astonishing look at prehistoric life and their primeval worlds. This lavish volume contains all of Stout's stunning murals for The Houston Museum of Natural Science, Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom, and the San Diego Natural History Museum. Includes detailed commentary guiding readers through his creative process. $39.95 HB will be available. Deluxe signed edition planned as well. 176 pages, 10" X 12". Coming September 2008.

Our latest title, *Steve Rude: Artist in Motion*, is now available. Over 300 works are collected in this 208 page, 9" X 12" full color collection. Available from your local book and comic book store, or order direct.

Flesk Publications™
P.O. Box 3174
Santa Cruz, CA 95063
www.fleskpublications.com
info@fleskpublications.com
(408)206-2346



$39.95 HB ISBN 978-1-933865-06-5
$59.95 DLX ISBN 978-1-933865-07-2

Coming August 2008, *Jules Verne's Twenty-Thousand Leagues under the Sea* adapted and illustrated by Gary Gianni. In addition, *Al Williamson's Flash Gordon: A Lifelong Vision of the Heroic*, with essay by Mark Schultz and introduction by Sergio Aragonés, plus *Storms at Sea: A Slight Fiction of the Days to Come* by Mark Schultz, are in the works.

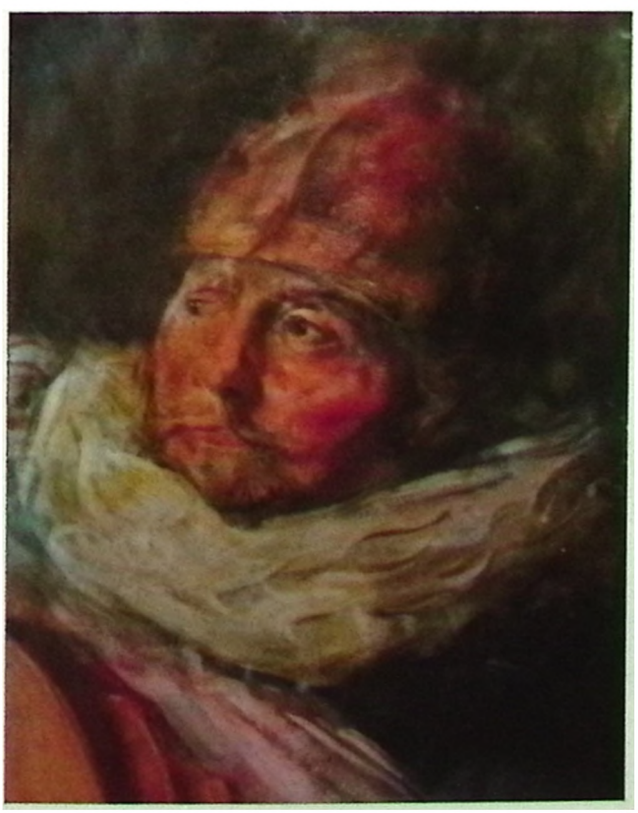
Visit our website for books on Franklin Booth, Joseph Clement Coll, and James Bama. Plus for news, interviews with the artists, and to view our gallery section. Join our online email newsletter for future book updates, show appearances, and store signings.

***Gilda Spying on the Duke,* original Illustration for the "Rlgoletto" series, *UFE* magazine, 1960**

Navy during the late 1940s, Morton applied and gained admission to Yale University's prestigious School of Fine Arts, completing the traditional four-year curriculum in only three, and graduating with honors with the Edwin Austin Abbey Fellowship for figurative painting. It is worth noting that the fellowship had been won the previous year by another Yale alumnus, the distinguished realist painter Robert Vickery, who had himself recommended that Roberts apply for it.

Upon leaving Yale, the budding painter lived and worked for a time in both Rockport and Gloucester, Massachusetts, producing in profusion vivid watercolors of the local landscapes, all handled with the kind of virtuosity one associates with a Sargent or a Homer, and winning for himself many gold medals from exhibiting societies. However, with a new wife and a growing family to support, the sale of his artwork at galleries was not sufficient for his needs. On the advice of friends, he journeyed down to New York City to see if he could find work as an illustrator.

At this point in time the great American magazines were entering one of their most lucrative periods, fueled by Americas prosperity after the war. They could compete successfully for and obtain the services of the worlds most distinguished artists and writers, and they paid handsomely. New York City was the cultural mecca of the nation, and its magazines the jewel in the crown. Competition for assignments on the lavishly-produced, high-circulation journals was enormous, and only the most accomplished could expect to gain admission and ae-



on study. Photo courtesy of Doug Beekman

< ***Gilda Sleepwalking,* original Illustration for tho "Rlgoletto" series, *LIFE* magazine, 1960**

Published sdrertlsIng Illustration depicting Alexander Graham Bell, 1958

ri»Wmry Uatch ter the published Illustration show, 1958

ceptance in these exalted realms. It therefore says much about Roberts' accomplishments as a painter even at this early stage in his career that he was able to rapidly obtain work as an illustrator at the very top of the profession, and to stay there throughout the course of his career.

Like many other artists whose fate it was to die young, Morton was prolific. During his short lifetime he was to complete scores of paintings on assignment for many of the most prominent magazines of the day, such as *McCall's, Redbook, Readers Digest, Sports Illustrated,* and *Life* magazine, where he was a great favorite with the editors. He continued to be active as well, as a genre painter, portraitist, and watercolorist, exhibiting at galleries throughout the Northeast to great acclaim, and winning numerous medals and citations. Many of these works have found their way into important private collections, and can be seen gracing the walls of prominent museums in both the United States and Europe.

His approach to painting could be described as, at times, highly eclectic and amongst his numerous canvases can be found those reflecting the influences of Veronese, Velazquez, Hals, and Rubens, not to mention artists of more recent vintage such as John Singer Sargent and George Bellows. There even exist paintings executed at an early age showing his respect for the work of his talented contemporary Jack Levine. Yet eclectic as it often was in both subject matter and technique, his work

always contained an extra indefinable dimension, a feeling of life, a beat, a breadth and freedom all its own. The Ballroom Scene he executed for Verdis opera *Rigoletto* is a case in point, as are the lushly painted tableaux he produced for *The Story of Jazz*—where the free and easy rhythms of the brush strokes, and the intensity of the colors suggest the ebullience and soulfulness at the heart of the music. Prominent amongst these is the painting alluded to at the beginning of this essay titled, "A Perfect Death," a canvas so alive that its owner was known to have designed an entire room in his home to showcase it.

It seems fitting that Morton's last commission should have been the execution of a vast series of murals commemorating the life and achievements of General Douglas MacArthur. The renowned and imperious World War II general was a visionary figure of larger-than-life dimensions, and his exploits would have lent themselves admirably to the kind of paintings at which Morton excelled. Over the years, as if in preparation for such a commission, he had been working on canvases of ever increasing size, while his imagery had become correspondingly bolder and broader in treatment, the scale of the figures more heroic. Mural painting seemed the next logical step in his development as an artist, and such a commission, if properly carried out, would surely have secured for him the serious recognition and acclaim he yearned to achieve.

I recall that he worked long and hard on the ebony pencil cartoons, taxing himself to capture the right effects. The dramatic drawings he completed hinted intriguingly at the great work to come, but there was to be no future glory, no consecration. For suddenly on January 19, 1964, fate tragically intervened and Morton Roberts died of a fatal heart attack at the age of 37.

A few weeks after his death, there appeared in the pages of *The Art Times* an anonymous eulogy written in his memory. It seems appropriate to quote it in full for the poignancy of its prose.

> He was our friend. He was an artist. He was young. He was not given the years which were necessary to advance a prodigious talent into that last finish which accompanies the disciplines and realizations of age. He left us in the month which is the early promise of the year, just as his youth was the early promise of an already accomplished life. We regret the loss of this enthusiastic and exuberant man. His life exemplified an additive form of vitality such as we cannot ever spare, and must always be regretful of losing.

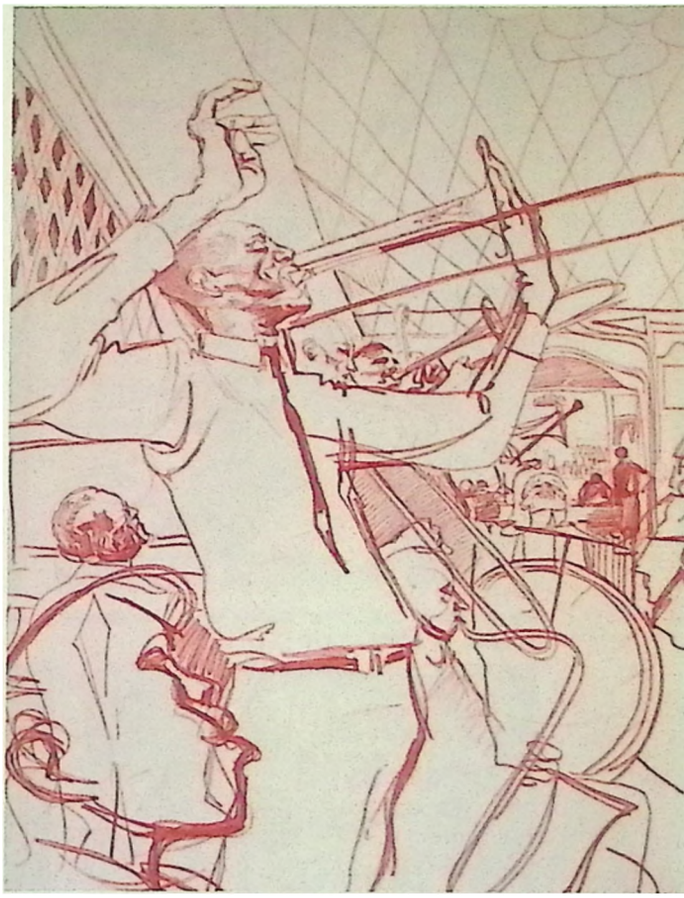
Hits Ctucjfo. origins! Illustration from the *Uu* series In *Ute* magazine. 1958

I can still remember Morton Roberts almost as if it were yesterday, a Havana cigar in one hand, a liqueur in the other, The Impresario of Art sitting before his easel in the early-morning light. Although bereft of years, he left behind a legacy of paintings that continue to speak to us with poignancy and grace in their own visual language. Taken together, they are as much a celebration of life as the songs sung by the mourners at that New Orleans funeral Morton attended so many years ago. Had the guys down on Jackson Square been able to view the fruits of his labor years later when the painting "A Perfect Death" was installed in a place of honor at the Lincoln Center Hall of Jazz, they would no doubt have put it best. Using a vernacular all their own, "Man," they might have said, "Could that cat ramble!" It's doubtful I could sum up Mortons special gift as a painter and illustrator any better!

—© 2007 by Abe Echevarria and Barry Klugerman

Abe Echevarria, a noted illustrator, educator and artist, is a New Milford resident and has worked for a diverse list of clients covering the corporate world, book publishers, movie studios and ad agencies. He has a long list of exhibitions and awards, including a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators. His work is collected by private and public art patrons.

Barry Klugerman is a freelance writer in the field of Illustration, and has worked as both a commercial illustrator and art editor. In 1993 he founded The Elfin Light Press along with his friends the illustrators James Warhola and Iain McCaig.The press published numerous limited edition signed prints illustrating classics of children's literature. He is also the executor of the Roy G. Krenkel Estate and along with his other labors as a writer has written articles and co-authored several books on Krenkel's work, most recently *RGK-The Art of Roy G. Krenkel* published by Vanguard Press in 2006. Currently he is working on a book on the Spanish fantasist Jose Segrelles, and preparing a new volume on Krenkel's work to be titled *Sirens and Sibyls—The Women of Roy G. Krenkel from Barzoom to Plumpus 7.*



A sketch from the Jazz Series In *UFE* magazine, 1958

www.illustrationartgallery.com

Original art & prints for sale

The best in European and American affordable illustration art from books, magazines, newspapers, comics and film

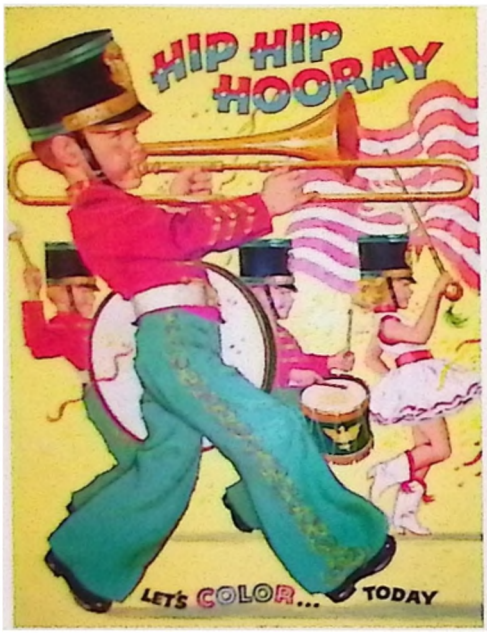
Over 250 artists work featured, including:

Carl Barks, Frank Bellamy, Jordi Bernet, Enki Bilal, Jesus Blasco, John Burns, Milton Caniff, Robert Crumb, Arturo del Castillo, Frank Dickins, Cecil Doughty, Will Eisner, Ron Embleton, Oliver Frey, Leone Frollo, Jim Holdaway, Rick Griffin, Graham Ingels, Jeff Jones, Michael Kaluta, Roy Krenkel, Harvey Kurtzman, Don Lawrence, Fortunino Matania, Milo Manara, Angus McBride, Philip Mendoza, Frank Miller, Moebius, Enric Romero, Francois Schuiten, Dave Sim, Barry Windsor Smith, Claire Wendling, Robert Williams, Gahan Wilson, Wally Wood, David Wright and many more.

Robert Crumb
signed limited silkscreen
edition of 200

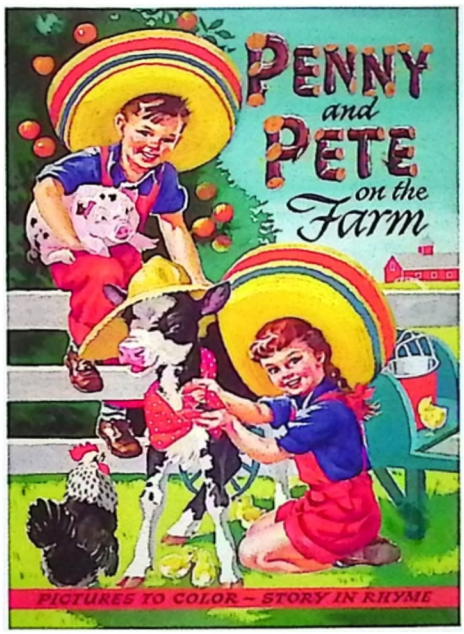
Robert Crumb
signed limited silkscreen
edition of 200

www.illustrationartgallery.com



Hip Hip Homy, 1956. Coven Thomas Shoemaker, gouache on board, 17 1/8" x 13 1/8'

Ballerina Coloring Book, 1953. Cover: John W. Northcross, gouache on board, 13" x 18 5/8"



Penny and Pete On The Farm, 1950. Cover: Louise Rumley, gouache on board, 10 7/8" x 15 1/2"

Bobby and Betsy's Easy Coloring, 1955. Cover: Barbara Briggs Bradley, gouache on board. 15 5/8' x 111/2* on board,

Head and Color, 1949. Cover: JX Schumacher, gouache on board, 15* x 11"

Paint With Water, 1952. Cover: Betty Gartrell, pastel on board, 9 3/8" x 12"

Trace and Color. 1955 Cover EluabethA.VMs gouache onboard 11 5'8*115 3 8*

Ballet Dancers to Color, 1949. Cover: Victor Kalin, The gouache on board. 19'x 13 7/8"

Heavenly nvlns and their Guardian Angels, 1948. Cover: Louise Rumley, gouache on board, 13 1/4" x 16"

THE STORY OF THE MEHBILL COMPANY PUBLISHERS

BY JEAN WOODCOCK

In April of 1979, I had the good fortune to purchase The Merrill Company Publishers of Chicago, Illinois. My original intention in contacting the company, as a collector and fan of paper doll books and toys, was to perhaps find some back stock of old books stored away in the warehouse somewhere. The last thing I thought I would do was *purchase the entire publishing company.* As you will soon discover, however, this is exactly what happened! But first, here's a little background to the story.

MARION E. MERRILL AND THE REGENSTEINER CO.

Marion Elizabeth Merrill, the founder of the Merrill Company Publishers, was born May 4, 1902, in Chicago. The only child of Anna Merrill, she began her publishing career selling magazine ads. Shortly thereafter, she became a layout artist; first for the *Chicago Tribune,* and then for a time at The Whitman Publishing Company in Racine, Wisconsin. Whitman was a publisher of 10-cent children's books, and it may be assumed that this was Marion's first exposure to the children's book publishing business.

Marion was not content to simply work for others in the children's book field; she felt the quality of the current books was poor and unimaginative, and she knew that she could do better. In 1933, Marion planned and drafted a few books of her own, and began to search for a printing firm that would work with her to publish the books. She eventually presented her designs to the Regensteiner Co., and convinced them that she had first-hand knowledge of the business. They became interested in her plan, and told her to prepare six or seven of her books in perfect 'dummy' form. If she could present them to a few of the larger chain stores in New York and secure orders from their buyers, Regensteiner would immediately proceed to manufacture the first series of 12 books.

Marion E. Merrill

Marion made her presentations, gathered the initial orders, and thusly began her career as a children's book publisher. She formed a contract and went into partnership with The Regensteiner Co. from 1934 to March 1945, calling her organization "The Merrill Publishing Company." Marion oversaw the creation of all of the books, and Regensteiner printed them. In a mere five years The Merrill Publishing Company became the second-largest publisher of children's books in the United States, and the name Merrill became synonymous with excellence in children's publishing.

THE MERRILL COMPANY PUBLISHERS

After Miss Merrill's contract with Regensteiner expired on May 22,1945, she quickly formed her own independent company—The Merrill Company Publishers. The company name may have changed slightly, but nothing else was lost in translation. The new company's books were as fine as any published before.

From all accounts, founder Marion Merrill was a stem and dedicated leader, a dynamic and highly motivated business woman who directed her company with a firm hand. She was never married, and proudly referred to her books as her children, directing every element of them from beginning to end. She selected the artists, suggested cover concepts, and supervised every facet of their production.

Records of this process are clearly documented in the company archives. Marion first decided what type of books she wanted to publish in a certain year, and then she decided on the cover concepts. After choosing an appropriate artist, she informed them of what she was looking for. The artist then sent her a rough tissue drawing of the cover. (Among the Merrill files there are hundreds of these sketches, one for each book published.) Miss Merrill made notes on the rough

Golden *CM Piper Colli,* **1953. Front and Back Covers: Arthur Sarnoff, gouache on board, 311/2" x 20"**

drawing with her comments, and sent it back to the artist. Another revised rough drawing was sent back, and when it was acceptable, another tissue drawing was furnished in color. Further notes about color and other details were made and sent back J must say here that Miss Merrill was a perfectionist, and she surely frustrated many of her artists. She made profuse comments and criticisms, and often said, “You can do better than that.”

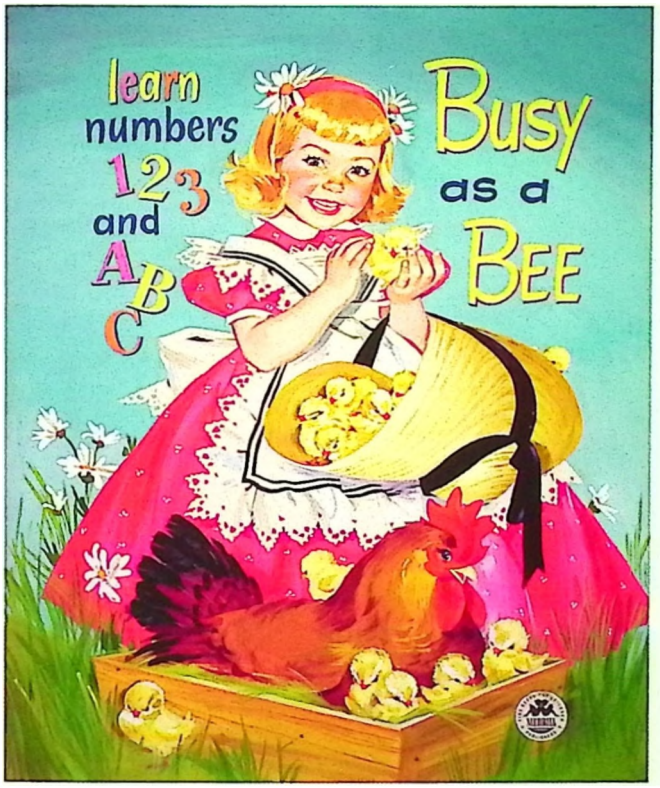
When the color tissue drawing was finally accepted, the artist proceeded with the final artwork, which on occasion was itself returned for revisions. A four-color separation in glass negatives was created in the final stages, and a color progressive print was made for approval. A progressive was a composite print made from the four negative plates, each plate representing one of the four colors used in the printing process (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black, referred to in the trade as CMYK.) Miss Merrill critiqued the separations, made her recommendations, then sent them back for revision. This process could take place any number of times until perfection was achieved. The archives contain complete files on every Merrill book that was produced, and this relentless pursuit of perfection may be seen time and again.

Miss Merrill’s file drawers also contain index cards on hundredsofartistsand illustrators. Each card containsan artist’s name and address, date, type of artwork he or she specialized tn, and personal notes about his or her work. Some of the comments included: “Nice children”; “Color questionable"; “ loo pricey"; “Greatest talent on West Coast” (that was in reference to Aurelius Battaglia); “Not the best artist”; “Younger version of Harry Anderson—a little more contemporary, interested but currently busy” (she was speaking of Bob Berran); and so on. Also in her files were literally thousands of magazine tear-sheets culled from contemporary periodicals. It was from these clippings that she chose the Merrill Company’s fine artists—Haddon Sundblom, Louise Rumley, Chariot Byj, Peter Hawley, Pearl Frush, Barbara Briggs Bradley, Victor Kalin, Joe Bowler, Arthur Sarnoff, Jay Darling, Edwin Megargee, Albert Staehle, Tran J. Mawicke, George Trimmer, Freeman Elliott, and Elizabeth Voss, to name a few.

FINE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Miss Merrill’s dedication and love for fine books was expressed in her lifetime pursuit of publishing “Beautiful Books” and “Fine Books for Children,” her two company mottos. She was not merely interested in amusing children, but she was also interested in teaching them, and many of her coloring books were geared toward educational themes. A testimony to her dedication is found in the 441 original books published by the Merrill Co. Publishers between 1945 and 1965. Each book was an elaborate production, featuring the original front-cover art, separate artwork for the back covers, and numerous interior illustrations.

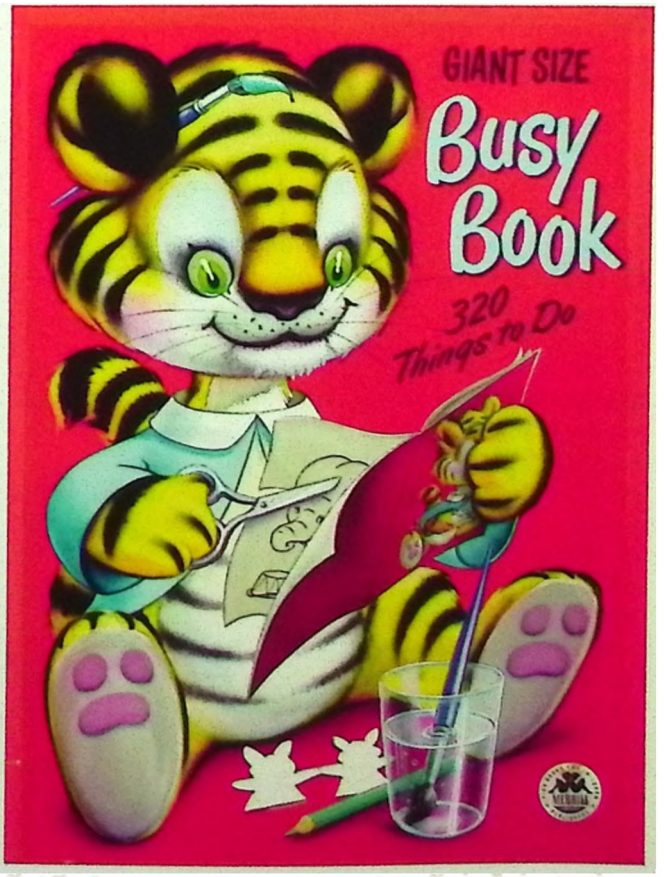
Due to Miss Merrills ill health in the late 1950s, most of the Merrill books published in this period were reprints of older books with modified covers. There were 170 of these from 1957 through 1964. In addition to the original published



Learn Numbers 12 3 and A B C, Busy As A Bee, **1954. Cover: Barbara Briggs Bradley, gouache on board, 19" x 15 1/2"**

Boys & *Giris from Faraway Lands-Color, Play, and Leam,* 1956. Cover: Thomas Shoemaker, gouache on board, 17 1/8" x 12 7/8"

First Bible Stories-Color, Read, **Cut-Out, 1954. Coven William Randall, gouache on board, 8 1/4" X11 5/8"**



Giant She Busy Book-320 Things to Do, **1951. Cover: Stanley Spohn, gouache on board, 16" x 12"**

Illustration 75

AirpUnes, Boats. Tnln, **Trucks** *Coloring Book,* **1950. Cover: WIIIIsm Timmins, gouache on board, 19 1/4* x 13 1/2***

Rocket *Ships 'n'Jets to Color,* **1951. Cover: Ted Hanke, gouache on board, 15" x 10 1/2'**

artwork there were many pieces of finished artwork that she had planned to publish. The bulk of the artwork was done in designers gouache, watercolor, or pastels. The only oil painting in the collection was by Haddon Sundblom.

Miss Merrill passed away in May of 1978; however, her childrens' books live on. Their colorful and exciting covers remain etched indelibly in the memory of many children. I know this is true, as 1 was one of them!

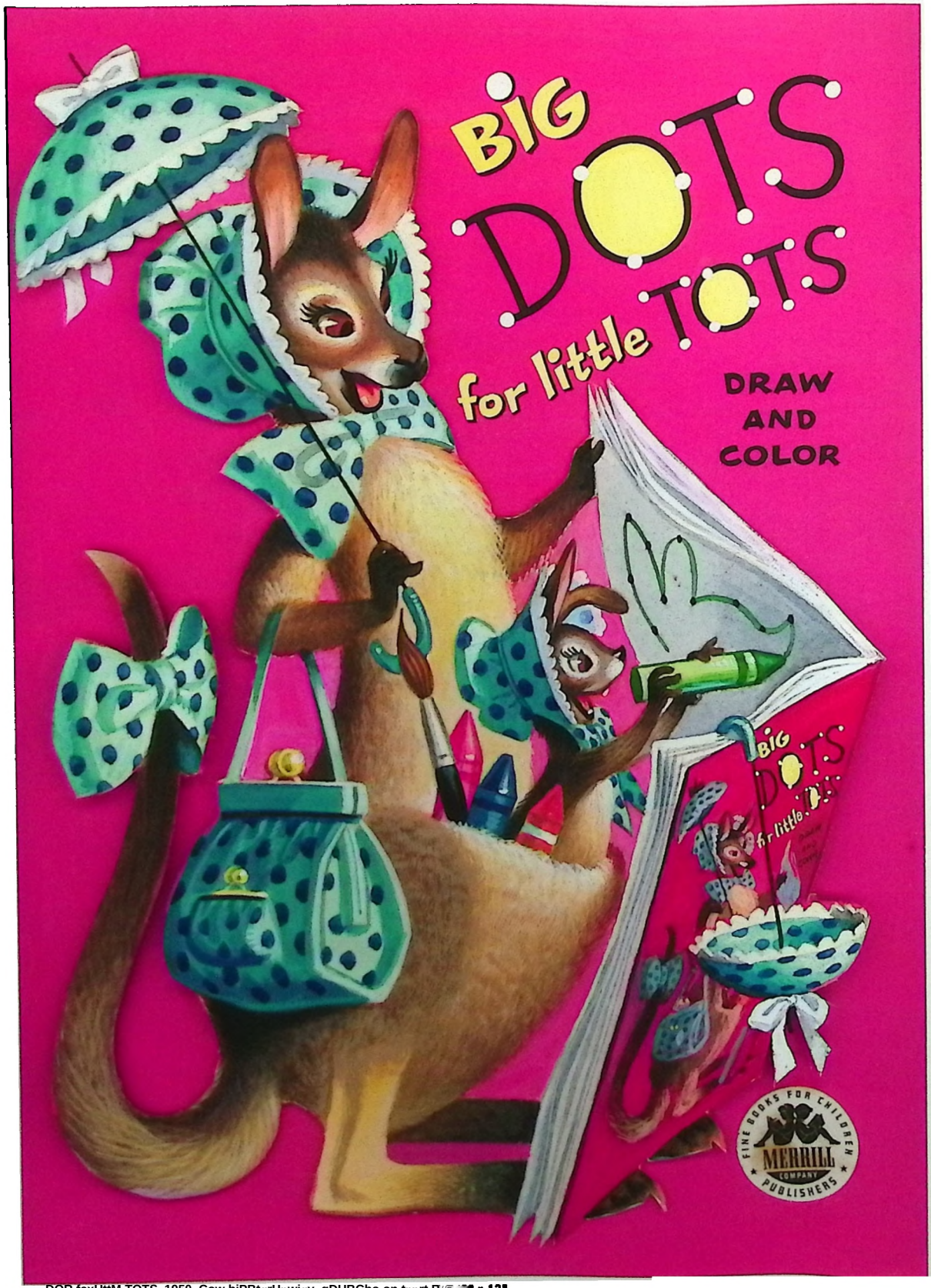
THE MERRILL COMPANY AND ME

After Marions death, The Merrill Company Publishers was willed to The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, to be sold in its entirety as a company, which 1 myself purchased in April of 1979. The story behind my acquisition and ownership of the company is a very unusual one. As it turned out, if I had not discovered and purchased the company and its archives, everything would have been destroyed after April 30,1979.

My involvement with the Merrill Company Publishers began in 1972.1 had been a collector of paper toys for many years, and since paper doll books were my favorite, 1 decided to publish a pictorial reference book on the subject. As I was not familiar with copyright laws, I thought 1 should contact every publisher still in business to seek their permission to use images of their books. 1 was able to contact publishers such as Whitman, Saallield, and Lowe with no problem. The fly in the ointment was the Merrill Co. I sent them a registered letter requesting their permission, but received no reply. Even the return receipt was not sent back to me. When I didn't hear from them I started calling. Each time I called, an elderly lady would answer the phone and in a little voice voice say "Good Morning...The Merrill Company Publishers." The lady, however, would not let me speak to anyone, nor would she answer any of my questions. If I called in the afternoon, there was no answer at all. Since I had no problem getting permission from the other publishers, I decided to go ahead and picture the Merrill books in my *Paper Dolls of Famous Faces,* Volumes 1 and 2.

Over the next few years I gave no particular thought to the Merrill Co. Fate, however, had something amazing in store for me. One day I decided to once again call the Merrill Co. I didn't know if they were still in business, but when I called I heard the familiar voice and theme, "Good Morning...The Merrill Company Publishers." I was really surprised when the woman, who had never had any conversation with me, asked, "Who may 1 say is calling?" I am not given to subterfuge, but when she asked I immediately replied, "Edith Lowe." The woman said, "I am sorry to tell you Mrs. Lowe, but Miss Merrill passed away." She further told me Miss Merrill had been sick for a long time, and had died of a heart attack several months before. I gave my condolences and got off the phone.

Space Happy, **1953. Cover: Tran 1 Mawlcke, gouache on board, 23 2/8" x 16 2/8°**



DOR fcxUttM TOTS, 1950. Cow bjPBt«rH»wi«y. gDUBCbo on t»»rt,B// x 12"

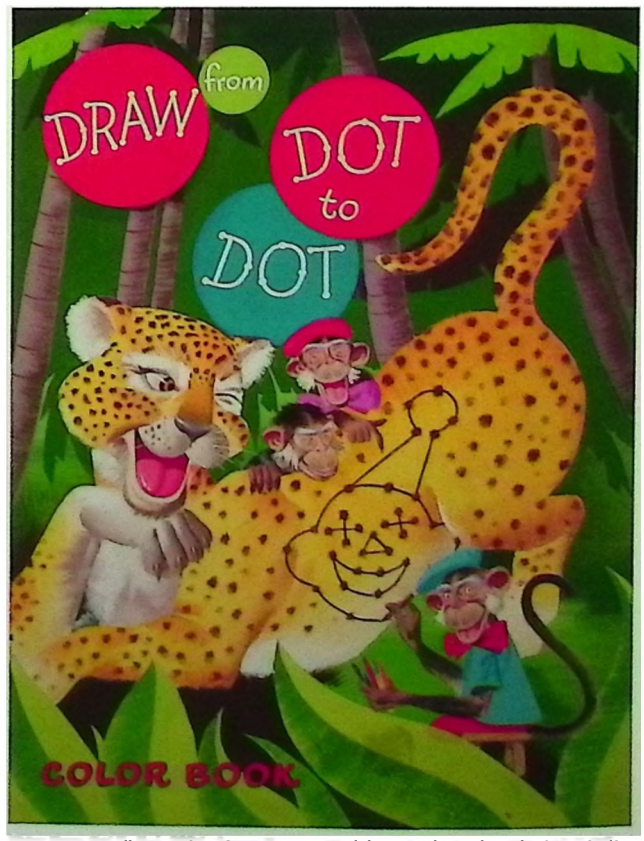
Thus began my journey to find the Merrill Company archives—if they still existed. In retrospect, if it had not been for my curiosity, determination, tenacity, and true grit, everything produced by Merrill would no longer exist.

First I had to find out when she died, and then I needed to know the name of the trustee of her estate. No small feat! I called the obituary archives of every Chicago newspaper and finally found out the date of her death. It was a very simple and short entry telling where and when she died, and where she was buried. That information sent me on another journey. I called the cemetary office and they found the record of her burial as well as the name of the funeral home involved. I called the funeral home and explained to the man that I was trying to locate the trustee of Miss Merrill's estate, and was told he had no idea. He did remember that only a few people attended her funeral, and said it was possible that he might have some records of people who attended and that he would get back to me. Time passed and I heard nothing. A couple of months later I received a letter from the funeral home giving me the name of a few of Miss Merrill's relatives, and the name of the trustee of her estate. He saved the day and—unknown to me at the time—the Merrill Co. Publishers.

My interest at that time was solely in purchasing some of the beautiful Merrill paper doll books for my personal collection and investment, as I was hoping there might be some left-over stock. Purchasing the Merrill Company *itself* never entered into my mind. When I called the trustee I told him I was interested in purchasing some books—the trustee never mentioned to me that Miss Merrill's will stipulated that everything had to be sold *together*, as a company. He said I could come to Chicago and take a look, and it is a good thing he didn't tell me that it had to be sold as a Company—lock, stock, and barrel—or I would never have gone. In September of 1978 my son Mark and I made plans to fly to Chicago to meet the trustee, who would take us to Lake Shore Drive where the company was warehoused. I called him when we arrived and was told he was very ill, and that someone else would meet us there, and to give him a call before we left. We were staying two days. When we arrived, facing us was a door with frosted glass at the top with no markings except a number. I knocked on the door and it opened, just a crack, and there stood an older lady. Guess who? It was the "Good Morning—The Merrill Co. Publishers lady," Ms. Samuels—the guardian of the gate, as it turned out. She informed us that we could come in and look around, but that she was leaving for the day (it was 1 pm) and to lock the door behind us. I was honored by their trust. To a dishonest person it would have been like turning kids loose in a candy store!

We had no idea what awaited us inside. What we saw was overwhelming! It was a typical warehouse with extremely high ceilings and four open rooms. There was a small office in the back that was Miss Merrill's, as evidenced by her things on the desk and in the drawers. Stacked in no order, almost to the ceiling, were thousands of cartons of books. There was hardly space to walk down the aisles. There were some large flat filing cabinets, and flat upon flat where the artwork was

Mr. Jolly, **1952. Cover: Louis Schmitt, gouache on board, 113/8" x 13 6/8"**



Draw Hom Dot lb Dot, 1951. Cover: Norman Rich, gouache on board, 19" x 13 7/8"

Betty Grable Paper Dells, 1951. Cover: Victor Kalin, gouache on board, 32" x 19 7/8"

Janet Leigh Cutouts & Coloring, 1953. Front Cover: Freeman Elliott, gouache on board, 16* x 22 1/4*

Janet Leigh Cutouts & Coloring, 1953. Back Cover: Freeman Elliott, gouache on board, 16* x 22 1/4*

Betty Grable Paper Dolls, A "Look-Thru" Book, **1953. Front Cover: Arthur Sarnoff, gouache on board, 16 1/2" 25 1/2"**

Betty Grable Paper Dolls, A "Look-Thru" Book, **1953. Illustration: Arthur Sarnoff, gouache on board, 16 1/2" 25 1/2"**

placed. Each piece was wrapped in butcher paper and labeled with the title, year, and artist—by first initial and last name. After I purchased the company, I discovered there were also brass printing plates for her catalogs; a large folder on every published book containing everything from its beginning to end; files of artists and illustrators; books containing the copyrights; company meeting books, and record books of everything produced; files and files of tearsheets with the artists' name indicated; and so on. As it turned out there were over 3,000 cartons alone, not counting everything else.

There are no words to describe our emotions upon seeing this overwhelming, unfathomable maze! My son looked at me and I looked at him, and he laughingly said, "Have at it, mother!" In a daze, Mark squeezed himself through a few aisles, and since every carton was marked, he started looking, as high up as he could, for something he might recognize. By some miracle he located a few cartons full of paper doll books. At least what we came for existed, to some degree. After announcing his meager find, Mark proceeded to put his feet up on Ms. Samuels' desk and took a nap. My own quest turned out to be less than fruitful. I woke up Mark, we shook our heads, and decided this had been a fool's errand. We were very discouraged. There seemed to be no rhyme or reason to what was there. After ultimately purchasing the company and going through everything, I was convinced that Miss Merrill never threw away a single scrap of paper, or anything else relative to her beloved books.

Betty Grable Paper Dolls, A "Look-Thru" Book, **1953. Back Cover: Arthur Sarnoff, gouache on board, 16 1/2" 25 1/2"**

Esther Williams Paper Dolls-See-Thru Corer, **1950. Back and Front Covets: Victor Kalin, gouache on board, 33“ x 20"**

Esther *Williams Coloring* **Book, 1950. Cover: Victor Kalin, gouache on board, 23 1/2* x16 1/2“**

Esther Williams Cutouts and Coloring, **1953. Front Cover: Arthur Sarnoff, gouache on board, 15 3/4° x 22"**

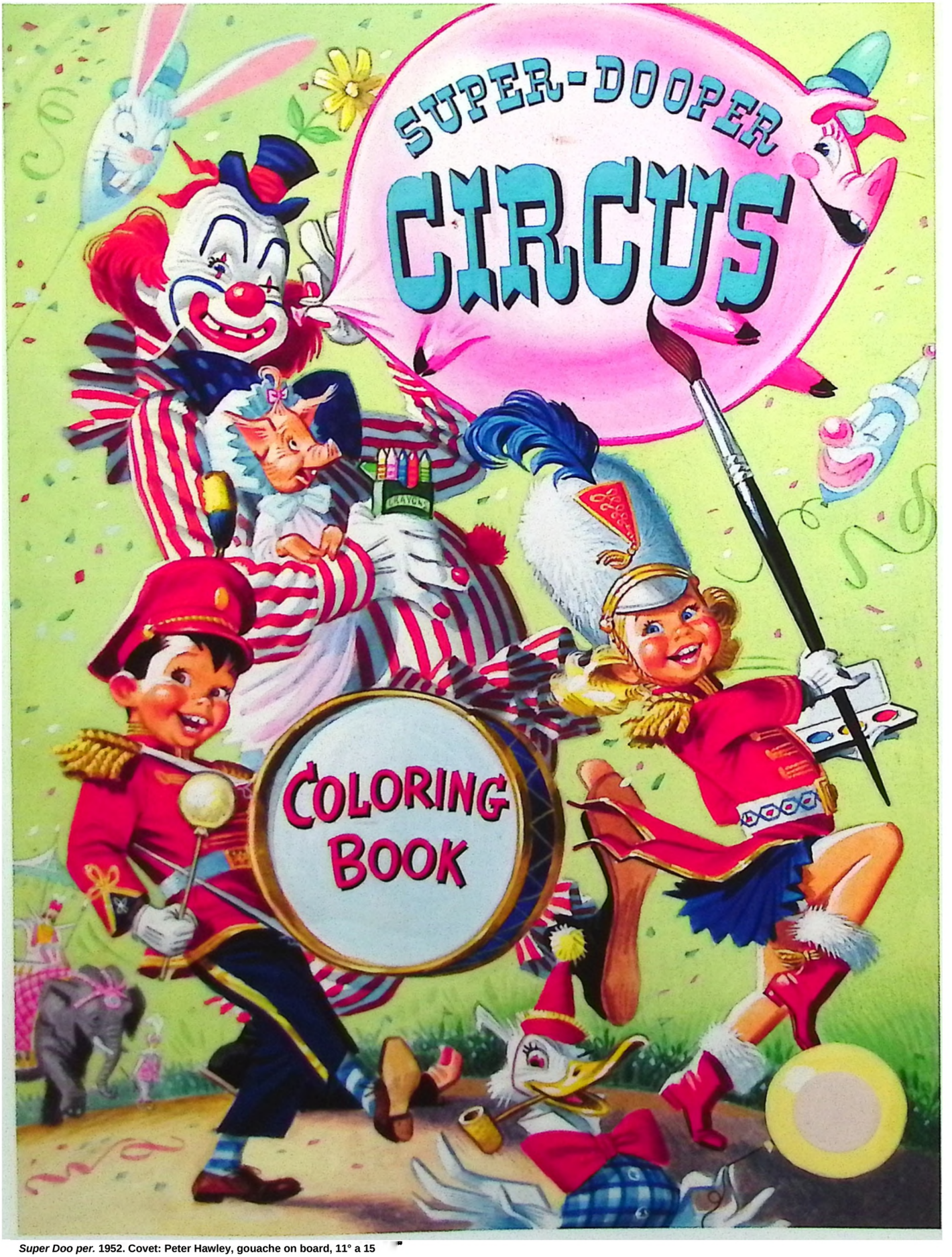
Esther Williams Cutouts and Coloring, **1953. Back Cover: Arthur Sarnoff, gouache on board, 15 3/4' x 22'**

***Dream Giri Paper Dolls,* 1947. Front and Back Covers: Bradshaw Crandall, gouache on board, each panel 27" x 33"**

***Piper Laurie Paper Dolls.* A *-Look-Thru' Book.* 1953. Back and Front Covers: Joe Bowler, gouache on board, 27 1/2" x 19 1/2"**

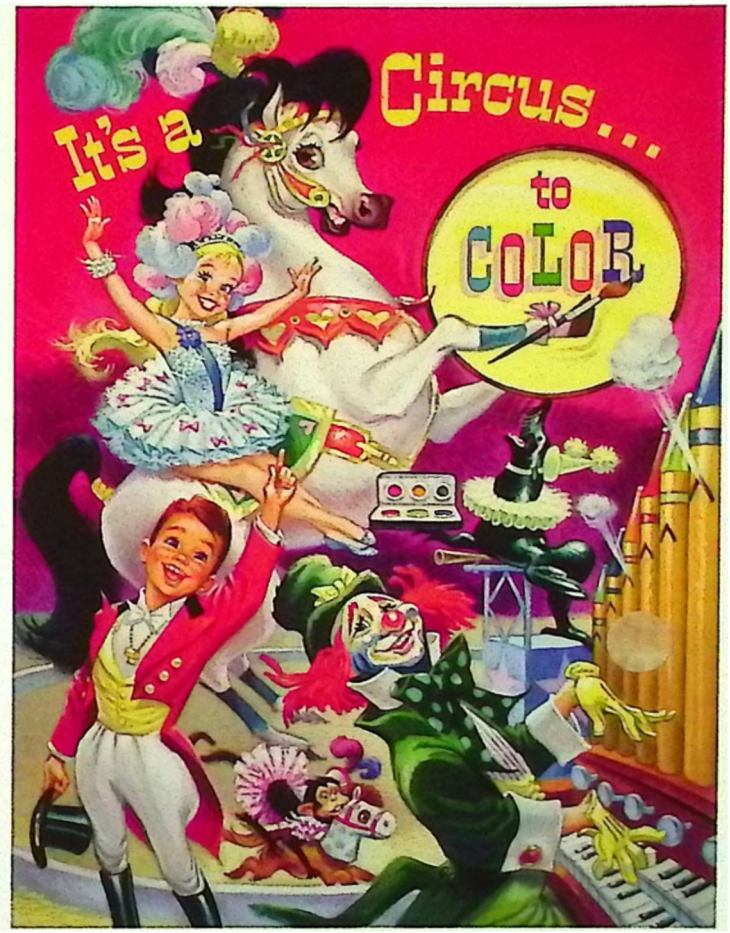
***Seven and Seventeen Dress-alike Dolls,* 1948. Front and Back Covers: Pearl Fnish, watercolor on board, each panel Is 14" x 17"**

LEFT: The cover art for *Heavenly Blue Wedding* (1955) was created by artist Barbara Bradley (nde Briggs), profiled In *Illustration* #21. Gouache on board, 27" x 15 1/4". Actress Tippi Hedron (later of *The Birds* fame) modeled for the bride; Cooper Studio Illustrator Bob Jones modeled for the groom. Photo courtesy of Barbara Bradley



Super Doo per. **1952. Covet: Peter Hawley, gouache on board, 11° a 15**

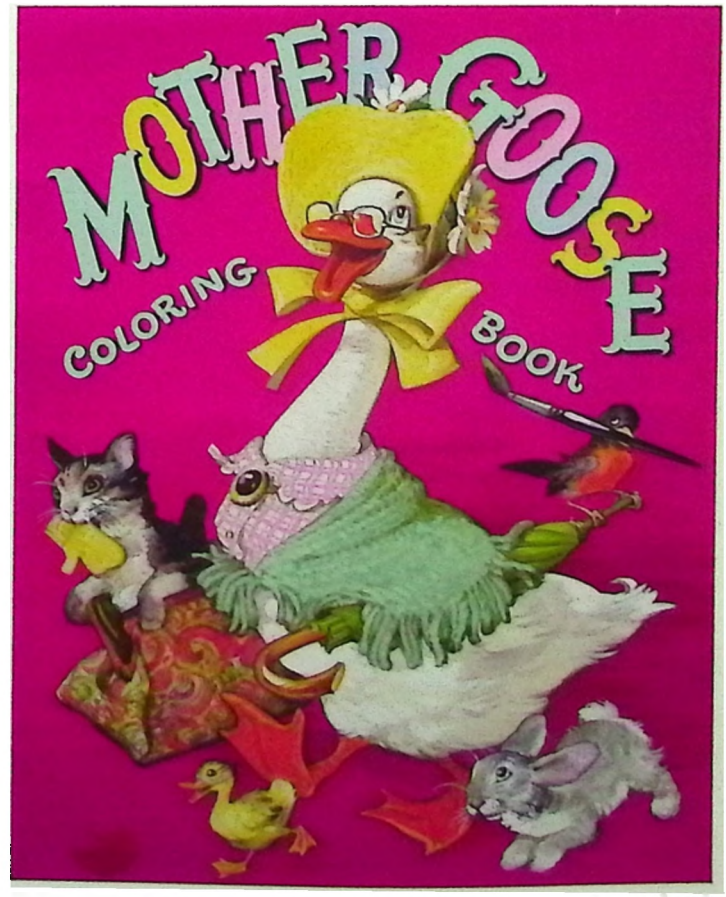
Hop Ini, **1950. Cover: Walter Early, gouache on board, 10 7/8" x 15 1/2"**



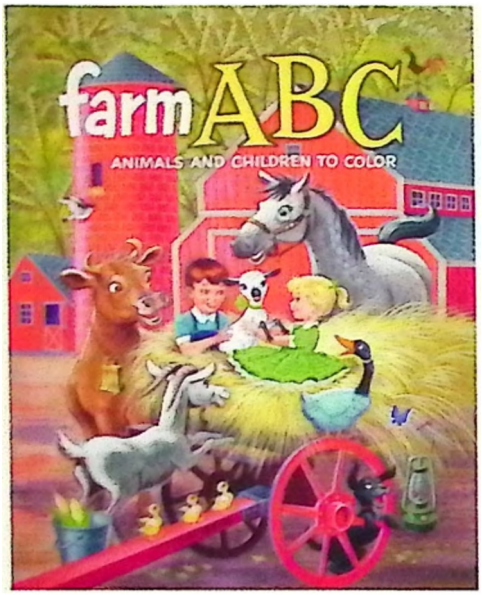
It's a Circus to Color, **1955. Cover: Peter Hawley, gouache on board, 111/4" x 15"**

After assessing our position and its futility, I called the trustee and once again told him I had come to buy some books, but that this was a nightmare. He asked us to come back the next day as planned to see if we could perhaps get a better overview of what was there. We went back the next day and made a general list, but it was a daunting task. I called the trustee again, and it was then that I was informed that *nothing* could be sold separately. It had to be bought in *total* as The Merrill Company Publishers. Just out of curosity, I asked how much they were asking for it. He said they had not decided, but that it was insured for $1 million. After I had a silent seizure, he told me to go home and think about it, and then I could write him and make an offer on the company. He said it had to be sold by April 20,1979, or it would be disposed of on April 30, 1979. The lease on the warehouse was going to run out, and they were not renewing the lease.

After I went home, I gave careful thought to the trustees' dilemma. How could he sell the company when you couldn't see anything? Without a detailed inventory, which he said they did not have, it would be almost impossible. If there was an inventory of the Merrill Co., which surely there was for insurance purposes, no one seemed to have it or care. All the trustee wanted to do was dump the company before the warehouse lease expired. I wrote a six-page, detailed letter giving him a run-down of what we categorized, and all of the scenarios involved in trying to sell everything, pluses and minuses. As it turned out, everything I said was true. I made

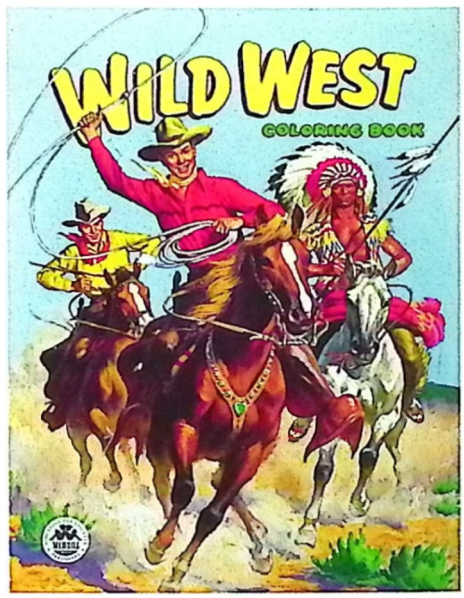


Mother Goose *Coloring Book,* 1949. Cover: Albert Staehle, gouache on board, 14 1/2" x 20 3/4



Farm ABC, **1955. Coven Harvey Greer, gouache on board, 12 3/8“ x 16 1/4"**

Sweet *Alice Blue-Pink,* 1953. Cover: Betty Gartrell, gouache on board, 10 7/8" x 15 1/2"

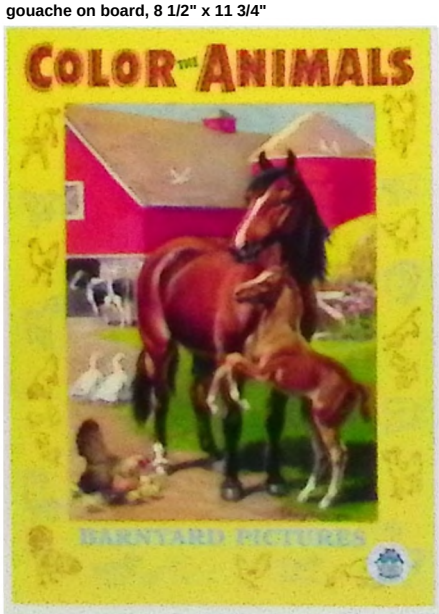


***Wild* West *Coloring Book,* 1955. Cover: Walter Baumhofer, gouache on board, 16 1/2" x 22 1/2"**

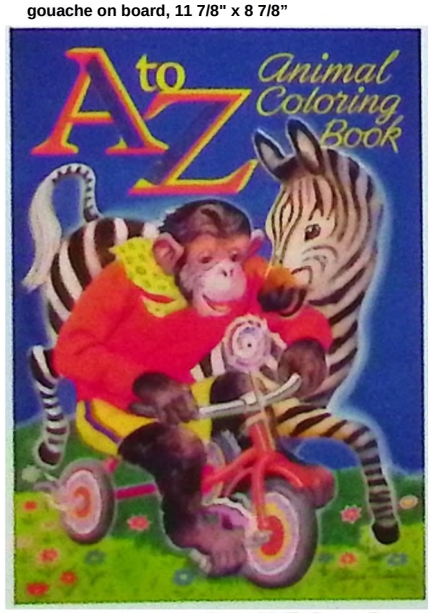
***Suite* Says *Let's Color,* 1955. Cover: Elizabeth A. Voss, gouache on board, 8 1/2" x 11 3/4"**

***Poppy's Coloring Book,* 1950. Cover: Chariot By), gouache on board, 11 7/8" x 8 7/8”**

***Happy Time Coloring Book,* 1955. Cover: Elizabeth A. Voss, gouache on board, 9 3/8” x 12 1/2"**

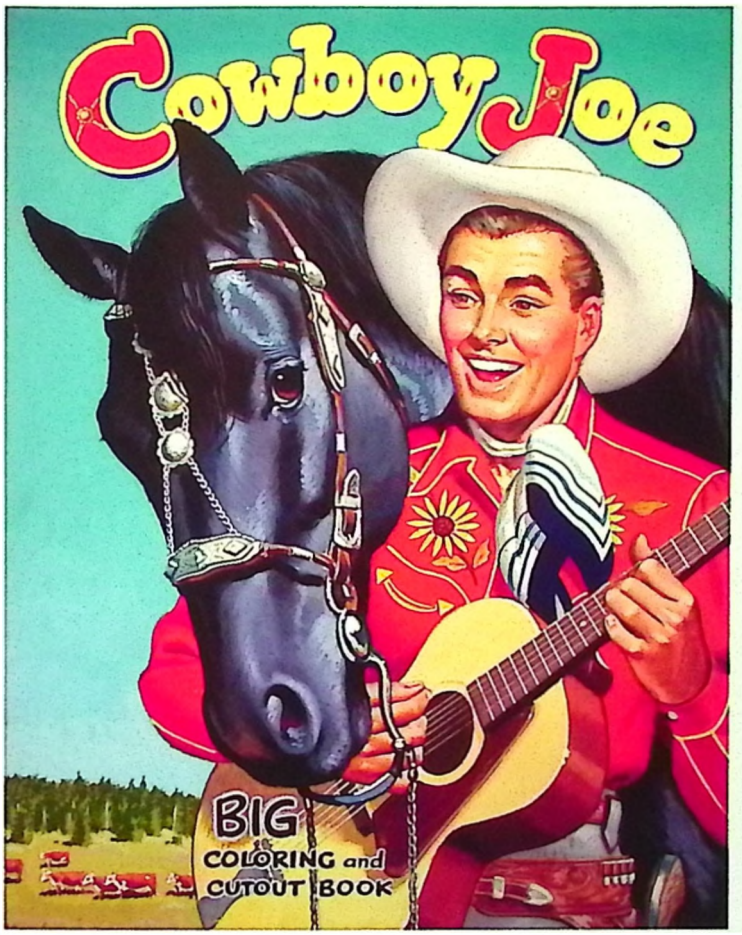


Color the Animats,* 1949. Cover: Edwin Megargeo, puacho on board. 11” a 13 1/2

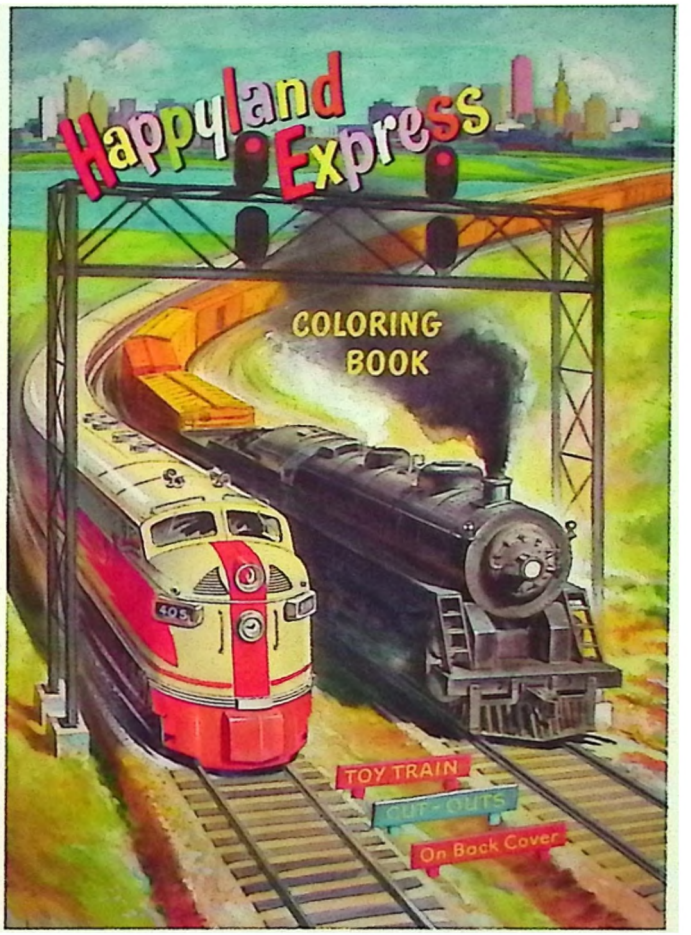


A to *Z Animal Coloring Book,* 1947. Cover: George Trimmer, gouache on board, 10 7/8“ x 15 1/2"

***Horses* A *Riders,* 1951. Cover: Earl Cordrey, gouache on board, 22" x 16”**



CowboyJoe, **1951. Cover: George Trimmer, gouache on board, 15 1/2" x 211/2"**



Happyland Express, **1951. Cover: Ralph Perelda, gouache on board, 111/2" x 17"**

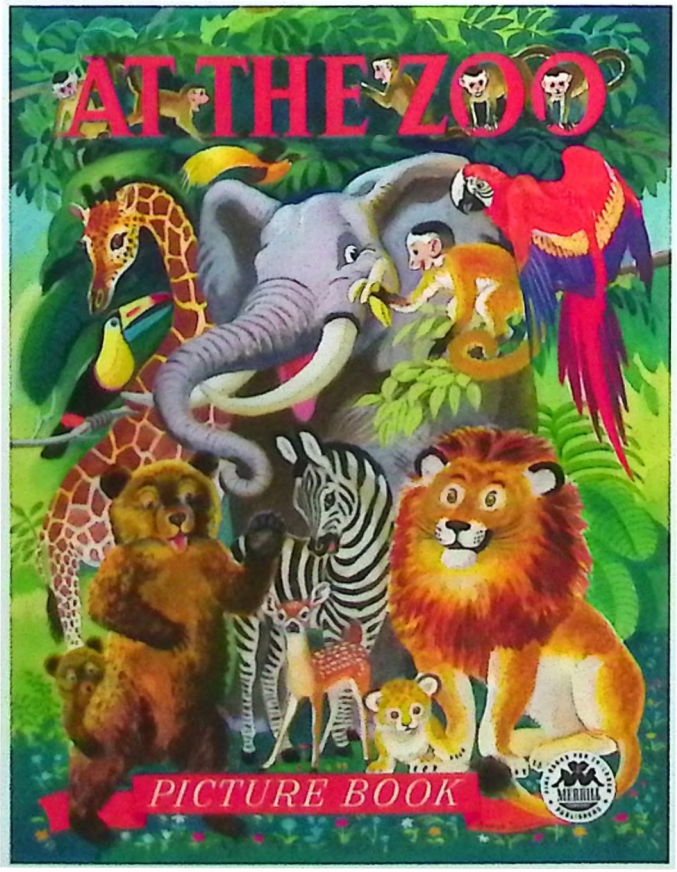
him separate offers for different categories of material, and then I left it at that.

Time marched on...and on...and on. I never heard from him again until the second week of April of the next year. He told me he had contacted different publishers and prospective buyers, and that they had all looked at it and were unable to make offers because they couldn't see anything. They too were overwhelmed and walked away. The trustee had exhausted all his leads, except for ME, and he was in a bind time-wise. Oh lucky me! He said that if I could get everything out before April 20th that I could buy it all at a certain price. It was a done deal, and Superman never flew as fast as I did. I hired workers, rented vans, recruited family, and we were Chicago-bound. Unfortunately I was not able to go, but my husband and son and son-in-law went. I immediately went to work renting a huge warehouse to house the material, flats to put the cartons on, etc., and then I sat and waited. Before the 20th, three vans rolled into Tulsa with my prize! What a thrill! It is impossible to describe what it felt like to look upon all of the beautiful, pristine-condition books, and gaze piece-by-piece at the magnificent artwork. It was as if all of my childhood visits from Santa Claus were wrapped up into one event. I am sure the wonderful artists of these books would be surprised to know their work survived. And to think how close all of this was to being destroyed. (And destroyed it would have been!) The thrill of looking at this artwork has never diminished for me. Every time I look at one of these bright, colorful, amusing, detailed, and amazing

me *Big Fin,* 1950. Cover: John Vickery, gouache on boani, 10 5/8" x 14 7/8"

Baby't *ABC Plctun Both,* 1955. Coven Peter Hawley, gouache on board, 16 1/2° x 10 1/4"

Monday to Sunday *Plctun Book.* 1949. Cover: Mary Murray, gouache on board, 91/2'113"



Ai the *Zoo Plctun Book,* 1946. Cover: George Trimmer, gouache on board, 10 1/4" x 13 1/2"

Little Red Riding Hood Plc Story Book, **1951. Cover: Kotcha a.k.a. Kathleen Rogers, gouache on board, 9" x 12 3/4"**

Three Uttle Kittens Picture Story Book, **1951. Cover: Genevieve Porter, gouache on board, 111/8" x 13 6/8"**

paintings there is a feeling of excitement. I truly experience joy and appreciation for the work that went into it, and I say, "Thank you, Miss Merrill."

In 1980,1 held a Merrill Co. Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and over a period of two days exhibited every piece of artwork along with its corresponding publication. Since no Merrill Co. book had been published since 1965,1 decided to produce a new souvenir paper doll book especially for the convention. I contacted Norman Mingo, the famous *MAD* magazine artist who had also done many books for Miss Merrill's company, and he happily agreed to participate.We decided to do a book on Vivien Leigh, and Norman sent me tissue drawings of the front and back covers. Unfortunately he soon became very ill, and passed away. Marilyn Henry, a well-known artist of contemporary paper dolls, used Norman's cover ideas and stepped in to create a beautiful new Merrill book.

After the Convention, a tornado hit one of my warehouses and completely demolished it. Before I could get out to the site to see if anything was salvageable, the manager had bulldozed everything into a pile. Luckily, most of the content of the warehouse was comprised of later book stock, and glass printing separations. It was a tragedy nonetheless.

Overall, the Merrill Company produced 441 original book titles. The following is a breakdown by year of the number of books published by The Merrill Co., followed by a breakdown of the total number of books by subject matter:

Uttle Stories For Uttle People, **1946. Cover: Rosemary Buehrlg, gouache on board, 101/4" x 13 1/2"**

Illustration 91

Santa'x ***Suiptlu Pilot Book,*** **1949. Cater Hidden H. Sandblom, oil on canvas, 30 3/4* x 21 1/2"**

***The Night Before Christmas Picture Story Book,* 1949. Cover: George Trimmer, gouache on board, 12 3/4" x 9 1/2"**

Books Published by Year:

1945: 5; **1946:** 19; **1947:** 8; **1948:** 24; **1949:** 42; **1950:** 33; **1951:** 40; **1952:** 41; **1953:** 51; **1954:** 40; **1955:** 43; **1956:** 46; **1957:** 4; **1958:** 9; **1959:** 10; **1960:** 6; **1961:** 11; **1962:** 5; **1963 :** 3; **1964:** 1, and **1965:** 1.

Quantity of Books by Subject Matter:

96 Paper Doll Books
202 Coloring Books
24 Picture Books
23 Picture Story Book
6 Sticker Books:
5 Stencil Books:
50 Educational Coloring Books
3 Paint With Water
32 Paint Books

It has been a pleasure to share my story of the magnificent Merrill Co. artwork with you. I wish you were able to see the entire collection, as there are probably around 750 individual pieces! It is wonderful that this artwork has survived, and I am confident that Miss Merrill would be pleased to know that the fruits of her labors and love have endured, and are being enjoyed by the readers of this magazine today. 6*

—© 2008 by Jean Woodcock

The author wishes to thank her daughter, Donna Asher, for her help in photographing and organizing the content of this article. If you are Interested In purchasing a piece of Merrill artwork, you may contact me at MerrillCoPub@aol.com

STREAMLINE ILLUSTRATIONS
DAMES, THUGS AND MAYHEM EXTRAORDINAIRE

SPECIALIZING IN ORIGINAL ART NOIR ILLUSTRATIONS FOR PULPS, PAPERBACKS AND MEN'S ADVENTURE MAGAZINES
BUY - SELL - TRADE
CALL LEO BRERETON AT
530-432-5831
EMAIL: LEOSTREAMLINE@SBCGLOBAL.NET
10 AM TO 10 PM PST, 7 DAYS
10162 DONNA WAY
PENN VALLEY, CA 95946

New and Notable:

CHARLEY HARPER-
AN ILLUSTRATED LIFE

BY TODD OLDHAM
420 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$200.00 HARDCOVER
AMMO BOOKS, 2008

This beautiful, large-format title is the definitive monograph of artist Charley Harper's six-decade-long career, and is perhaps one of the finest books I have ever seen devoted to an illustrator. Renowned New York-based designer Todd Oldham rediscovered Harper's work in 2001, and collaborated closely with him until his death last year, combing through his extensive archive to edit and design this stunning release.

Charley Harper is an American original who created his art from his home studio in Cincinnati, Ohio until his death on June 10, 2007 at the age of 84. His style was graphic and often humorous, a type of minimal realism, as he called it, that continues to resonate and inspire his admirers today.

Charley Harper—An Illustrated Life, showcases illustrations that appeared from 1950-1975 in the *Ford Times* magazines, as well as in books such as the beloved *The Giant Golden Book of Biology* in 1961, *Betty Crocker's Dinner for Two* in 1961, and *The Animal Kingdom* in 1968, among many others. His well loved book *Birds and Words*, first published in 1974, is considered a classic. Remarkably, however, Charley's work has never before been published in one complete retrospective. This massive 420-page volume is the definitive collection.

BIBLIODYSSEY

BY PK
160 PAGES
$34.95 HARDCOVER
FUEL PUBLISHING. 2007

Bibliodysscy the book (and the well-known blog) features eclectic and rare book illustrations derived from many dusty and obscure digital repositories from around the world, brought together day-by-day and accompanied by insightful background commentary. Although about two-thirds of the images in the book have appeared on the site previously, this is not simply a repeat of the archives. There are many new entries added here.

The book (like the site) covers a very wide spectrum of styles, time periods, and subject matter. You can expect everything from astronomy to zoology, and from Art Nouveau to the Renaissance. PK, the creator of the blog, scours the internet daily in search of new web archives, and he has managed to discover all manner of unusual images and unearthly delights. While it may sound like a haphazard collection of unrelated visual material, the book is in fact much more of a cohesive and interrelated survey of illustration history than these few words may suggest. The book is also a beautiful product—FLT.L have done a wonderful job in designing this fascinating little object.

STEVE RUDE: ARTIST IN MOTION

BY STEVE RUDE & JOHN FLESKES
INTRODUCTION BY MIKE BARON
208 PAGES
$39.95 HARDCOVER / $59.95 SIGNED EDITION
FLESK PUBLICATIONS, 2008

I was first exposed to Steve Rude's work in the early '80s when I began reading his *Nexus* comics. His fluid draughtsmanship, and the painted covers of his comics were a tremendous influence on my growth as an illustrator. Interviews with Steve in magazines such as *The Comics Journal* and elsewhere led to my discovery of the work of Andrew Loomis, John Gannam, and other early illustrators. A glance through his sketchbooks at a comic convention in the early '90s was a similar revelation. In many ways, Steve's influence led directly to my discovery of classic illustration, and ultimately to the existence of this very magazine. I have always been a fan of Steve's work, and I am very happy to see that John Fleskes has now assembled a long-overdue retrospective of "The Dude's" career, filled with beautiful full-color reproductions of his amazing artwork.

The book explores Rude's versatility in several subjects and mediums. Chapters cover his comics and illustration work, private commissions, animation material, life-drawings, and an elaborate sketchbook section. Numerous finished paintings are accompanied by preliminary work, such as sketches, color roughs, and use of reference materials. In addition, there is a "how-to" segment, which shows a painting project from start to finish. Almost all of the works are scanned directly from the original artwork. Many are published for the first time.

Fans of Rude's comic work, art students, and admirers of exemplary illustration will all be thrilled by this beautifully produced new book.

ALEX RAYMOND: HIS LIFE AND ART

BY TOM ROBERTS
312 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$49.95 HARDCOVER
ADVENTURE HOUSE, 2008

Best known as the creator of *Flash Gordon*, Alex Raymond (1909-1956) revolutionized the comic world with his realistic drawing style and bravura brushwork. In addition to *Flash Gordon*, Raymond also applied his prodigious skills to the creation of a number of other comic strips including: *Secret Agent X-9*, *Rip Kirby*, *Jungle Jim*, *Tim Tyler's Luck*, and *Tillie the Toiler*. In 1949, Raymond received a Reuben Award from the National Cartoonists Society for his work on *Rip Kirby*. Tragically, Alex Raymond's life was cut short when he was killed in an automobile accident in Westport, Connecticut, at the age of 46. He is buried in St. John's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Darien, Connecticut. This new 312-page volume is an authoritative look at the career and impact of this fine artist, and features an introduction by James Barna, as well as a foreword by director (and Raymond collector) George Lucas.

THE AGE OF ENCHANTMENT: BEARDSLEY, DULAC, AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES, 1890-1930

BY RODNEY ENGEN
160 PAGES
$45.00 SOFTCOVER
SCALA PUBLISHERS, 2008

Published to accompany the first major exhibition of British fantasy illustration to be held in London (at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, November 2007-February 2008), *The Age of Enchantment* marks the rise of the Golden Age of Book Illustration. Due to the 1870 Education Act, the growth of mechanical printing methods, and significant social mobility in Edwardian England, illustrated books of fairy stories and myths published with lavish plates became the coffee-table books of this era, bought and consumed by adults.

The book begins with Aubrey Beardsley, whose short creative life (he died of consumption at 26) was dedicated to 'beautiful decadence' and who, as the chief artistic acolyte of Oscar Wilde, is remembered and celebrated for his illustrations of Wilde's *Salome* and for the groundbreaking magazine *The Yellow Book* where he was the artistic director. One review of *The Yellow Book* called for an Act of Parliament "to make this kind of thing illegal," referring to Beardsley's illustrations.

Beardsley set loose a new spirit of hedonism, and although the spirit of decadence was tamped down following Wilde's trial for indecency in 1895, and Beardsley's death in 1898, the genie was out of the bottle; a new generation of illustrators emerged intent on borrowing from the past—especially from fantasy and rococo—the rich decorative elements of the Orient, the Near East, and the ethereal fairy-world of the Victorians.

The Age of Enchantment pays homage to the many bold-faced names of English illustration including Beardsley, Rackham, Dulac, Nielsen, Pogany and Charles Robinson, but also introduces us to the Detmold Twins, (who, at the tender age of just 13, exhibited at The Royal Academy), The Glasgow School Artists, and Harry Clarke, who brought the Beardsley religion to Ireland. This new book is a marvelous survey of one of the richest periods in the history of fantasy illustration and will appeal to anyone who appreciates drawing, children's literature, or the book arts.

PAINT OR PIXEL: THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN ILLUSTRATION ART

EDITED BY JANE FRANK
160 PAGES
$29.95 SOFTCOVER
NONSTOP PRESS, 2008

This fascinating collection of art and essays, by the best of today's science fiction and fantasy artists, presents candid opinions behind the revolution now taking place in the illustration field. Are computers creating a seismic shift in the creation of science fiction and fantasy art, or are they just another tool in the artists paint box? Collecting original fantasy and science fiction art may never be the same! ♦

KAYO books
Vintage Paperbacks and Pulps
Mystery ■ SciFi ■ Counterculture ■ Sleaze
The only bookstore of its kind in the country!
Our entire store is filled with vintage books.
We also carry original illustration and comic art.
814 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94109
415-749-0554
Open Thurs.–Sat. 11AM TO 6PM, or by Appointment
www.kayobooks.com
kayo@kayobooks.com

Did You Look?
We now have 100 paperback cover reproductions, many with the corresponding reference photos used by the artist. Along with our posters and giclees, we also offer 8 x 10 prints of the covers and photos. You can create your own custom portfolio! Greeting cards and T-shirts, too. For some of the finest in vintage art noir, please visit us at:
ramaguirecoverart.com
r-a-m-c-a.com

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Double Lives: American Painters as Illustrators, 1850-1950

September 7 through November 23,2008

The Brandywine River Museum, PA

This exhibition and its accompanying catalogue explores the often uneasy relationship between the art of easel painting and the art of illustration. It focuses on artists who were an important part of the history of the narrative tradition in American culture, and who practiced both easel painting and illustration in the years between 1850 and 1950. Among the artists represented are Winslow Homer, N.C. Wyeth, Frederick Remington, John Sloan, Grant Wood, and Rockwell Kent. The exhibition is organized by guest curator Richard Boyle and the New Britain Museum of American Art (Connecticut).

Formore information, visit: www.brandywinemuseum.org

Americans Abroad: J.C. Leyendecker and the European Academic Tradition's Influence on American Illustration

May 21 through June 21,2008

The Society of Illustrators, NY

For more information, please visit www.societyillustrators.org

Cathie Bieck: 13 Years of Artistic Expression

February 8 through May 4,2008

The New Britain Museum of American Art, CT

Nationally known artist/illustrator Cathie Bieck will be featured in a retrospective of her work at the New Britain Museum of American Art opening February 8.

Bieck is best known for her distinctive scratchboard illustrations, involving a process similar in concept to woodblock printing. Working on clayboard, Bieck carves delicate yet powerful black and white illustrations that have become her trademark. Her illustrations have appeared in such publications as *Esquire, Atlantic Monthly, The New York Tinies, Wall Street Journal, Time Magazine,* and the *Washington Post.* Her clients have included Random House and Warner Brothers Records, among many others.

For info: www.nbmaa.org

LitGraphic: The World of the Graphic Novel

November 10,2007 through May 26.2008

The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, MA

This exhibition explores the history of the graphic novel, featuring personal commentary' and artworks by celebrated historic and contemporary practitioners. Original book pages and studies, sketchbooks, and video interviews provide insights into an evolving and exciting art form. Artworks by Jessica Abel, Sue Coe, R. Crumb, Howard Cruse, Steve Ditko, Will Eisner, Brian Fies, Gerhard, Milt Gross, Marc Hempel, Niko Henrichon, Mark Kalesniko, Peter Kuper, Harvey Kurtzman, Matt Madden, Frans Masereel, Frank Miller, Terry Moore, Dave Sim, Art Spiegelman, Lynd Ward, Lauren Weinstein, Mark Wheatley, Barron Storey and others will be on view.

For more information, visit: www.nrm.org

National Geographic: The Art of Exploration

January 27,2008 through May 25,2008

Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA

For more than a century, the National Geographic Society's illustrators have taken readers to places beyond the reach of a camera's lens on journeys of the imagination to destinations that can be seen only through the artist's eye. Vivid and compelling, their images have allowed us to witness the birth of our planet and look forward to the colonization of space—helping us to understand our history and the mysteries of the natural world. Renowned artists N.C. Wyeth, Andrew Wyeth, Charles Knight, Jean-Leon Huens, Tom Lovell, Robert McCall, Pierre Mion, Thornton Oakley, James Gurney and many others are represented in this exciting exhibition celebrating more than one hundred years of National Geographic art.

The Windy City Pulp and Paper Convention

April 25 through April 27,2008

Westin Lombard Yorktown Center, IL

Featuring pulps, paperbacks, and much more! Special guests include Ron Goulart and Will Murray. Art show sponsored by *Illustration* magazine!

For more info, visit: www.windycitypulpandpaper.com dr

In the Next Issue...

McGINNIS

TINKELMAN

FLORA

The Illustrations of Robert McGinnis by Art Scott

The Art of Murray Tinkelman by Dan Zimmer

The Art of Jim Flora by Irwin Chusid

Exhibitions and Events, Book Reviews...and ***much more!***

THE BIG PICTURE
ROOSEVELT HOTEL, NYC
JULY 2-5

ICON5 | NYC | 08

FOR ONLINE REGISTRATION & CONFERENCE INFORMATION,
GO TO WWW.THEILLUSTRATIONCONFERENCE.ORG

MORE THAN THE USUAL CROWD

The Fine Art of Illustration

Arthur I. Keller (1866-1924), Two belles in Paris, from *Her Letter* by Bret Harte, 1906; watercolor.

Illustration House

☎ 212/966-9444

WWW.ILLUSTRATIONHOUSE.COM

110 West 25 Street, New York, New York 10001